





## Legislator, rights group slam PNA over Hamas arrests

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — A Palestinian legislator slammed Palestinian President Yasser Arafat's administration on Wednesday for its widespread illegal arrests of Hamas activists, as a human rights group said many of those arrested had been tortured.

"The authority refuses to implement the law and arrests people without charges and without even telling the attorney general," Palestinian Legislative Council member Hatem Abdul Qader told a press conference.

"We have reached a dead-end with the authority over these arrests. No one knows how many people have been arrested," said Mr. Abdul Qader, a representative from Arab east Jerusalem.

Mr. Abdul Qader said he asked Attorney General Fayez Abu Rahma about the number of those arrested. "He told me he had no powers to stop them and there was nothing he could do to win the prisoners' release."

Mr. Abu Rahma submitted his resignation on April 30 in a move which Mr. Abdul Qader said was to protest against the arrests by the security forces.

But Mr. Abu Rahma told AFP he had resigned "due to pressure from the justice minister [Freih Abu Midein], who had been trying to limit my role and my powers."

"I found there was no use in my staying in my position," Mr. Abu Rahma said, adding that the dispute with Mr. Midein was not over the illegal arrests.

Palestinian police have arrested scores of Hamas members in a crackdown launched after the March 29 slaying of Hamas chief bomb-maker Mohammed Sharif, who police say was killed by rivals within the movement.

Hamas denies the police claims, saying Sharif was killed by Israel, perhaps with help from Palestinian security officials.

Mr. Abdul Qader warned that council members would start "putting public pressure on the authority in the next few weeks, by planning demonstrations and protests outside prisons" if the authority does not follow the rule of law.

"We in the legislative council are very worried about the increase in these arrests and the danger they pose to democracy in Palestine," said Mr. Abdul Qader, who has led efforts in the 88-member legislative council to win the release of political prisoners.

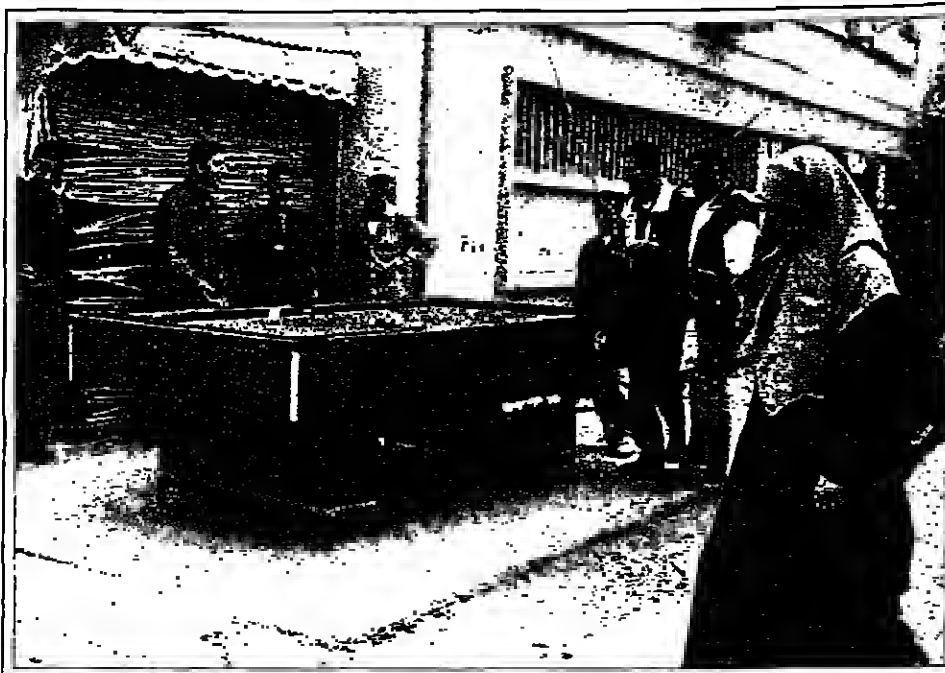
"Security officials have put the attorney general's stamp and signature on detention orders and arrested people without even telling the attorney general," Mr. Abdul Qader said.

Meanwhile, the Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group (PHRMG) issued a report accusing Palestinian security forces of using torture and trying to suppress freedom of speech in its investigations of Sharif's killing.

"None of those who have been arrested have been charged with any crime, and many of them have been tortured," PHRMG head Bassem Eid told the press conference.

The PHRMG report said detained Hamas members were beaten, handcuffed and hanged painfully by their arms from windows.

The PHRMG said police "harassed journalists" who reported on Hamas arrests and Hamas accusations against Palestinian officials in the Sharif case.



BILLIARDS IN ALGIERS: A veiled Algerian woman Wednesday walks past unemployed youths playing open-air billiards in the working class neighborhood of Al Djemaa in the Algerian capital. Billiard tables placed on the street attract Algerian youths in poorer neighborhoods in contrast to the traditional billiard parlours found in richer parts of the city (Reuters photo)

## Teenage Algerian waiter has throat slit, hanged from tree

ALGIERS (AFP) — A teenage waiter had his throat slit and was then strung up from a tree at the weekly cattle market at Khemis Miliana, near Ain Defla, southwest of Algiers, the daily Liberté reported Wednesday.

The youth was setting out tables and chairs for the cafe's first customers in the souk when he was attacked. His assailants also robbed him of around \$300 amid "indescribable panic," the paper said.

A few hours later, a trader was riddled with bullets at point blank range at the same market, the paper added.

The daily Al Ahd reported that two people had been killed at the market by armed men but gave no details. It said that two other people had also been kidnapped by the same assailants.

The daily Al Khabar, which carried a report of the waiter's murder, also reported that a member of a self-defence group had been injured Tuesday when a bomb exploded near his home in the Cheratia district near Medea, south of Algiers.

It also reported that an armed group had sabotaged electricity pylons on Monday night at Ain Cheraba, near Tlemcen, west of Algiers.

## U.S. House urges Arafat hand over murder suspects

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The U.S. House of Representatives Tuesday passed a resolution urging Palestinian President Yasser Arafat to hand over to the United States suspects in the murders of American citizens.

Republican Representative Ben Gilman, chairman of the International Relations Committee, said at least nine Americans had been killed by Palestinians since 1993 but the authorities had received cooperation from the Palestinian Authority to arrest the murder suspects.

"We should demand prosecution of the suspected perpetrators," Gilman said.

A 1987 law permits prosecution in the United States of people who murder U.S. citizens while they are in another country.

## Egypt, Qatar take further step toward mending fences

DOHA (AFP) — Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak's presidential adviser met Qatari Foreign Minister Hamad Ben Jassem Ben Jaur Al Thani here Wednesday, in the latest step to mend fences between the two Arab states.

The official news agency QNA said Sheikh Hamad and Oussama Al Baz discussed latest developments in the region as well as steps to reinforce ties between Cairo and Doha.

Their relations plummeted last November when Egypt, along with several other Arab states, boycotted a Middle East economic conference hosted by Qatar, in protest at Israel's participation.

The Qatari foreign minister was at the centre of the dispute, accusing Cairo of orchestrating an Arab boycott, while the two countries waged a war of words through their newspapers.

But the Qatari emir, Sheikh Hamad Ben Khalifa Al Thani, visited Egypt in March for talks with Mr. Mubarak, and Mr. Baz said the whole dispute was nothing more than "a passing summer cloud."

The presidential adviser arrived Tuesday for a three-day visit, the first by such a high-ranking Egyptian official since the crisis.

## Israeli prison officer killed in bombing

RAMLE (AFP) — A car bomb killed a senior officer in Israel's prison authority on Wednesday, police said.

Yakov Ziegelbaum, a physician who oversaw an education and rehabilitation department in the prison service, was killed when his car exploded as he was leaving home near the central Israeli city of Ramle, police said.

Israeli Internal Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani said Ziegelbaum appeared to have been targeted because of decisions he made at his previous job as chief medical officer for the prison authority.

Mr. Kahalani lamented the killing as a "serious escalation in crime."

As the leading prison doctor, Ziegelbaum rejected repeated requests for hospitalisation from Uzi Meshulam, a self-styled rabbi serving a 10-year sentence for a 1991 shoot-out between his followers and police.

Meshulam holed himself up in his home for several days with explosives in efforts to force the government to issue charges against Israeli health officials for allegedly kidnapping Yemenite Jewish children in the 1950s so they could be adopted by Jewish couples of European descent.

"There were claims by certain individuals concerning Ziegelbaum's medical position, things that weren't true," Mr. Kahalani said. "This could be the basis for our investigation."

"There's no doubt this attack was intended to settle accounts," Mr. Kahalani told army radio.

## Turkish party targeted in bomb attack

ISTANBUL (AP) — Separate bombs exploded Wednesday in Istanbul, causing some damage but no injuries.

There were no responsibility claims for either attack.

The first bomb, hidden in trash in front of a downtown military hotel used by navy officers, exploded, shattering some windows, according to the Anatolia news agency.

It was not immediately clear how many people were staying at the hotel in the low-income Kasimpasa district.

Another bomb, left inside the downtown office of the ruling Motherland Party, exploded later at 10:30 a.m. in the low-income Eyup district. Another bomb in the same building was defused by police at the site.

Authorities said two bombs in the building were left by two members of the leftist outlawed Communist Labour Party-Leninist who sprayed the walls with their party symbol in red.

The Anatolia news agency said the assailants entered asking to use the toilets.

A cleaner, the only employee present at the time, was found by police tied up and locked up in the bathroom.

Outlawed leftist, Kurdish and Islamist groups have carried out similar attacks in the past.

## Turkish court fines Ciller's husband \$8 in fraud case

ANKARA (AP) — Former Turkish Premier Tansu Ciller's husband avoided prison Wednesday when a court found him guilty of "misuse of power" but fined him two million Turkish liras — the equivalent of \$8.

Mr. Ciller was being tried for fraud based on accusations that he altered official papers documenting the family's wealth. The papers were presented to parliament investigating corruption allegations against Ms. Ciller.

Last month, a prosecutor however, reduced the charge against him to "misuse of power," which carries a five-month prison term.

Ms. Ciller, prime minister from 1993-1996, and her husband have been dogged by corruption allegations since she came to power and survived several parliamentary probes, mostly with the help of her coalition allies of the time.

Parliament is setting up a new all-party commission to investigate fresh allegations that millions of dollars of the family's assets cannot be accounted for.

Ms. Ciller is shielded from criminal prosecution by parliamentary immunity.

In a separate case, Ozer Ciller is being tried on the new allegations and could face up to five years in prison if found guilty.

The couple have denied any wrongdoing. They accuse rivals of plotting to ruin her political career.

The family reportedly owns several million dollars worth of assets both in Turkey and the United States, including a hotel, a mall and a house.

## Food needs lower than reported — Sudan aid agency

KHARTOUM (AFP) — Famine threatening south Sudan's Bahr Al Ghazal region affects up to about 20,000 people and not the hundreds of thousands cited by international agencies, a Sudanese relief official said Wednesday.

Nevertheless, Abdul Atti Abdul Kahir, the manager of the Sudanese Council of Voluntary Agencies (SCOVA), told AFP that urgent international assistance was still required.

Several charities operating in Bahr Al Ghazal, which has recently seen fighting between Sudanese rebels and Khartoum's troops, have warned of an impending catastrophe that could strike more than 300,000 people.

Mr. Khair, however, said that a survey conducted by U.N. and other relief agencies between last September and January put the number of people in both government and rebel-held areas at 185,000, of whom "not more than 10 per cent are in need of relief."

He called on the international community to provide assistance and contributions "in accordance with the actual needs and without politicising the humanitarian situation."

The statement from the chief of SCOVA, which groups all Sudanese relief organisations and several foreign aid charities, came the same day as a round of peace talks between Khartoum's Islamist military junta and the mainstream rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) wound up in Kenya.

As the discussions took place behind closed doors in the Nairobi region, the SPLA accused the military government of using food shortages as a weapon against the peoples of the mainly Christian and animist south Sudan, while Khartoum has for its part allowed an increased number of relief flights to southern regions including Bahr Al Ghazal.

Mr. Khair stated that "the present food situation in Bahr Al Ghazal is not as critical as is now being reported by local and international media, and the number of people in need of food relief does not reach the reported over 300,000 people."

His figure of 185,000 people, however, came from a survey before fighting was said to have displaced large numbers of southerners.

## China regrets breakdown of Mideast talks in London

BEIJING (AFP) — China voiced regret Wednesday over the breakdown of Middle East peace talks in London, noting the Palestinians had adopted a "flexible and pragmatic" attitude.

"China regrets the breakdown of the Mideast talks in London and hopes that all sides will make an effort to reach common understanding on relevant issues at the earliest possible time and break the peace process deadlock," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhu Bangzao said.

China had "noticed the more flexible and pragmatic attitude taken by the Palestinian side in a bid to push the peace process forward," the official Xinhua news agency quoted him as saying.

Speaking a day after the two-day separate talks collapsed in London, Mr. Zhu said that China was "very concerned about the possible negative implications of the long-term deadlock in the Mideast peace process."

## Egyptian, Norwegian foreign ministers urge action on Mideast peace

CAIRO (AP) — The foreign ministers of Egypt and Norway on Wednesday said it was urgent that progress be made quickly in Mideast peace negotiations before the basis for the current peace process disappears.

Norwegian Foreign Minister Knut Vollebaek outlined that view after meeting with his Egyptian counterpart, Amr Musa, to discuss Tuesday's meetings in London trying to restart Israeli-Palestinian peace talks.

Mr. Vollebaek, whose country fostered the 1993 Oslo accords that are the basis for the peace process, urged Israelis and Palestinians to go to Washington with frank ideas about the American compromise.

Mr. Vollebaek warned that if the Washington talks failed, "it will be a very dangerous matter" because it will mean removing the very basis for the peace process.

Asked if his country would be willing to host other meetings if the Washington session does not take place or fails, Mr. Vollebaek said Norway was ready to organise talks which the two sides agree upon.

### JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19  
PROGRAMME TWO

**Thursday Programmes**

15:10 Cartoon — Dinky Dis  
15:30 Cartoon — The Animal Park  
16:00 L'Ecole des Fans  
16:30 Doc. — Blue Water  
17:00 Dreaming  
17:00 N.B.A.  
18:00 Drama — The Burned Bridge  
19:00 Le Journal  
19:15 Science Magazine  
19:30 News Headlines  
19:35 Comedy — Big Brother  
20:00 Doc. — The Great  
20:30 Drama — Dr. Quin Medicine Woman  
21:10 The Oprah Winfrey Show  
22:00 News in English  
22:30 Feature film: "Here Comes the Sun"  
23:59 Comedy — Can't Hurry Love  
00:30 End of T.X.

**Friday Programmes**

15:10 Cartoon — The Adventures of Teddy Ruxpin  
15:30 Cartoon — Wishbone  
16:00 He Shoots, He Scores  
16:30 Tanzaan  
6:30 French Programme — Game Show  
19:00 Le Journal  
19:15 French Programme  
19:30 News Headlines  
19:35 Comedy — "The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air"  
20:00 Documentary — Life on the Internet

## JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

### USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

**NIGHT DUTY**

AMMAN:

Dr. Ramzi Mazzawi 894788  
Dr. Salim Daboubi 776751  
Dr. Bassam Karadshah 4389200  
Dr. Abdul Wahab Awad 434670  
Firas pharmacy 5661912  
Ferdous pharmacy 778336  
Al Asema pharmacy 4637055  
Nairoukh pharmacy 4637672  
Al Salam pharmacy 4644945  
Yacoub pharmacy 4644945  
Shmeisani pharmacy 4637660  
Najib pharmacy 847632

IRBID:

Dr. Ghazi Ta'ammeh 250080  
Al Quds pharmacy (—)

ZARQA:

Dr. Samir Al Lawzi 989601  
Khalifeh pharmacy 983417

**EMERGENCIES**

Food Control Centre 4637111  
Civil Defence Department 5661111  
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 4630341  
Civil Defence Emergency 199  
Rescue Police 192 4621111 4637777  
Fire Brigade 4617101  
Blood Bank 775121  
Highway Police 843402  
Traffic Police 896290  
Public Security Dept. 4630321  
Hotel Complaints 5605800  
Price Complaints 5661176  
Water & Sewerage Complaints 897467

### HOSPITALS

AMMAN:

The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 5921199  
The Islamic Abdi 56661317  
Husseini Medical Centre Tel. 836813, 856856  
Luzulu 4630195  
Khalidi Maternity 4642816  
Akileh Maternity 4642412  
Malhas, J. Amman 4636140  
Palestine, Shmeisani 5607071  
Shmeisani Hospital 5669131  
University Hospital 5353444  
Al-Muasher Hospital 56672279  
Al-Ahli, Abadi 56641646  
Italian, Al-Muashreen 7710112  
Al-Bashir 77511126  
Army, Marka 8916115  
Queen Alia Hospital 56024050  
Amal Hospital 5674155

ZARQA:

Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)83323

### DEPARTURES

**Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights**

06:45 Beirut (RJ)  
07:20 Moscow (RJ)  
07:55 Paris (add) (RJ)  
12:15 Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)  
12:20 Amsterdam, Chicago (RJ)  
12:30 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)  
12:45 Kuwait (RJ)  
13:00 Paris (RJ)  
13:20 London (RJ)  
13:20 Athens (RJ)  
20:35 Larnaca (RJ)  
21:20 Jeddah (RJ)  
22:30 Cairo (RJ)  
00:30 Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta (RJ)

**Other Flights**

13:00 Riyadh (SV)  
14:10 Muscat, Abu Dhabi (GF)  
15:10 Sharjah (AH)  
15:40 Doha (QR)  
16:00 Dubai (EK)  
19:00 Paris (AF)  
20:25 Tel Aviv (LY)  
21:10 London (BA)  
21:10 Beirut (MS)  
21:40 Beirut (MS)  
23:20 Istanbul (TK)  
23:35 Larnaca (CY)  
01:15 Amsterdam, Beirut (KL)  
03:00 Rome (AZ)

**Royal Wings (RW)**

(For Thursday and Friday)

10:20 Agaba (arriving at QAIA and proceeding to Marka Airport) (RW)  
20:20 Tel Aviv (arriving at QAIA on Friday only) (RW)  
22:35 Tel Aviv (arriving at QAIA on Thursday only) (RW)  
23:25 Agaba (arriving at Marka Airport) (RW)

**ARRIVALS**

**Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights**

07:45 Sanaa (RJ)  
09:45 New Delhi (RJ)  
10:00 Bombay (RJ)  
10:05 Dhahran, Riyadh (RJ)  
10:25 Beirut (RJ)

**FOR THE TRAVELLER**

**QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT**

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (44)53200 where it should always be verified. Information on other flights are supplied on phone 44 (52700) or 44 (53250).

### CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Sweifheh, Tel. 5920740  
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 4637785  
St. Joseph Church Tel. 4624590  
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 4622366  
Anglican Church Tel. 4624853/4624811  
St. Afrem Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 771751  
Arman International Church Tel. 865897  
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 5688404  
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295  
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Tel. 4654932  
St. John the Baptist at De la Salle College Tel. 5661757

### WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Hot, dry and dusty weather conditions will prevail with clouds appearing at different altitudes and winds southeasterly moderate to active. In Agaba, it will be hot and dusty, winds northerly moderate, and seas calm.

Amman 21/36  
Agaba 25/39  
Deserts 24/42  
Jordan Valley 19/40

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 35, Agaba 38  
Humidity readings: Amman 22 per cent, Agaba 43 per cent.

### what's going on

**FILMS**

"Spanish film 'El balcon abierto' at the National Theatre, Jabbal Amman on Thursday at 8.00 p.m.

**MAY FAIR**

Annual fair of the British Ladies of the garden of the British ambassador's residence on Friday (11:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.) will include a grand raffle, games, entertainment and home-made products. Entry will go to local charities.

**EXHIBITIONS**

Works by Muhammad Al 'Amiri at the National Association building, Jabbal Amman, until May 8.

Works by Ecuadorian artist Olmedo at the Instituto Cervantes, Jabbal Amman, until May 7.

Paintings by Lebanese-American artist entitled "Artist's Book of Art and the Disappearing Works by Berlin-based artist Merwan Bashi entitled "A Suite of Works by contemporary Arab artists."



## RJ flies to Tehran beginning June 15

AMMAN (Petra) — Royal Jordanian (RJ), the national air carrier, will resume direct flights to Tehran as of June 15, according to RJ Deputy Director General for Commercial Affairs Majdi Sabri.

Dr. Sabri said RJ will operate two direct flights per week on Monday and Friday to Tehran.

The RJ official said the reopening of the direct links with Iran will promote religious tourism to Jordan from Iran, as well as support business trips. Iran has not announced its intention to reopen a direct Iranian airline link in the near future, Dr. Sabri added.

Direct flights between Jordan and Iran were suspended in 1980 at the beginning of the eight-year Iran-Iraq war.

## Six referred to court for selling drugs in prison

By Rana Hussein  
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The State Prosecutor has referred six people to the State Security Court on charges of trafficking drug pills inside a Jordanian prison, according to a judicial source.

State Prosecutor Samad Ali, who last week finished questioning the six individuals, has filed charges of drug use and trafficking.

According to the source, the six individuals, who he would not identify, would put urine pills in balloons and swallow them, "then they would commit minor crimes to enter the prison."

"Inside the prison, they would sell the pills to inmates for JD5 per pill," the source maintained.

The source added that police discovered the matter after observing one of the suspects attempting to sell some pills to the inmates.

45-year-old woman stabbed to death

Meanwhile, police said they were searching for suspects in the stabbing death of a 45-year-old woman, who was found in her house in the Shafa Badran area late Tuesday night.

The woman, who was not identified by the authorities, received 118 stab wounds to different parts of her body, according to the coroners.

The authorities have ruled out theft as a motive for the crime, since the woman's jewellery and money were found in the apartment.

The coroners who examined the woman said she was not subjected to sexual assault.

Police contacted by the Jordan Times on Wednesday said they were investigating the incident.



MINISTER MEETS WITH CULTURAL ATTACHÉS: Minister of Culture Talal Sa'at 'an Al Hassan and Arab cultural attaches in Amman on Wednesday discuss means of enhancing inter-Arab cultural cooperation and implementing cultural agreements and executive programmes. Mr. Hassan called for circulating cultural agreements to the concerned institutions in Jordan to facilitate the follow-up process (Petra photo)

## Ministry to provide building plans for Palestinian projects

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Public Works and Housing will provide its Palestinian counterpart with sample blueprints for schools, health centres, post offices, hospitals and government buildings to help it carry out construction projects in the self-rule areas.

The ministry's secretary general, Bashir Jaghbeer, made the announcement Wednesday at a meeting with a Palestinian delegation, during which the two sides reviewed areas of cooperation in public works and road construction and maintenance.

Mr. Jaghbeer said Jordan is ready to extend a helping hand to the Palestinians by providing them with expertise in these fields.

The head of the delegation, Palestinian Public Works Minister Daifallah Akhras, thanked Jordan for its support and said his ministry wishes to benefit from Jordan's experience. He noted that a draft project on road maintenance has been submitted to the Palestinian Legislative Council, which he said hopes to receive Jordanian assistance in implementing the plans.

Meanwhile, a Jordanian consulting firm that has branches in the self-rule areas Wednesday signed an agreement with the Palestinian National

Authority on providing engineering services for feasibility studies and designs for a road near Wadi Nar-Beit Sahour in the West Bank.

The JD10 million road will link northern and southern West Bank territory and pass through the Jerusalem area, a stretch of about 10 kilometres.

Mr. Akhras thanked the Ministry of Public Works and Housing for their readiness to offer assistance to the Palestinian people.

Mr. Jaghbeer said the Jordanian government will shoulder the cost of conducting the feasibility study, which should begin in the coming few days.

## Upcoming meeting to discuss UNRWA report on Palestinian refugees

AMMAN (Petra) — The Arab countries hosting Palestinian refugees and major donor nations will hold a meeting in Amman on May 28 to discuss a report on the refugees' situation to be presented by Peter Hansen, commissioner general of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA).

Matar Saqer, director of information department in Amman, said the coming meeting will be attended by representatives of 26 countries, including the Arab states hosting the refugees, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt and Palestine, and European Union members, as well as the donor nations.

At the meeting, which will be held at the Radisson SAS Hotel, UNRWA hopes to secure more pledges of financial support to be able to continue offering social, health and educational services to the refugees, according to Mr. Saqer.

Otherwise, he added, the agency will have to resort to measures adopted in the past, such as service reductions, in order to deal with the recurrent deficit in its annual budget.

At the conference, Mr. Hansen is expected to outline the agency's present financial situation and upcoming programmes, said Mr. Saqer. The UNRWA commissioner general is also expected to urge the concerned parties and the world community to help the agency overcome its financial problems and continue its humanitarian services to the Palestinian refugees until their problem has been solved in implementation of U.N. resolutions, he added.

According to Mr. Saqer, the agency's present budget for 1998 is approximately \$314 million, in addition to an estimated \$40 million of in-kind food assistance from the European Union. But UNRWA still faces a \$55 million deficit accumulated over the past few years, he noted.

UNRWA offers services to 3.5 million Palestinian refugees in its five fields of operation: Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, the West Bank and Gaza. Of this number, 1.5 million are registered in the Kingdom.

During a visit to the refugee camps in Jordan, U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan announced that he would be launching a world-wide campaign to ensure increased aid to UNRWA, while British Prime Minister Tony Blair stated during his visit that the U.K. was studying the prospect of increasing its contributions to the agency.

## Pilot project aims to reduce pollution, generate electricity

By Ahmad Khatib  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A U.N.-backed pilot waste management project will be launched in Russeifah, the site of a major garbage dump, to help cut pollution and generate electricity by exploiting methane gas from waste emissions.

The \$5.5 million project, funded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Danish government and Jordan, will also turn the site's solid waste into fertilisers for agricultural purposes.

Yasir Abumoghli, senior UNDP environmental officer, said the project, expected to be completed within three years, will provide one megawatt of electricity when operational.

"The bio-gas project will be small in size," he told the Jordan Times in a recent interview. "However, by selling generated electricity it will expand into other areas of Jordan and in the region," Dr.

Abumoghli added.

He said the UNDP will provide \$2.5 million of the total cost, while \$1.5 million will come from Denmark and \$1.5 million from Jordan.

Residents of Russeifah, an industrial town close to Amman, have long complained of bad smells and fumes coming from the garbage dump, which takes waste coming from Amman and other areas.

"The UNDP has a number of projects that aim to protect environmental and natural resources in Jordan," he said. "This project is one of them."

He said the UNDP gave Jordan \$329,000 to help it reduce the use of substances that can cause climate change.

"The Kingdom was the first country in the world that submitted its report on climate change to the United Nations," he said. "Hence, this was acknowledged and the UNDP provided Jordan with \$87,000 to develop a model for protecting water resources."

"We are concentrating on the water resources of the country because they are a major environmental problem in Jordan," he stated.

Another project to be launched soon concerns developing wind and solar energy. It will provide renewable energy resources to around 200 remote villages in the Kingdom through installations such as windmills and solar systems.

"This will not only help provide power to people's homes, it will also provide electricity for income-generating activities," Dr. Abumoghli said.

In addition to these projects, the UNDP, through Global Environment Facility donations, has provided 17 small grants since 1992 to help community-based groups and non-governmental organisations to introduce environment-friendly policies.

"So by solving our environmental problems, we can help in resolving global ones," he said.

## Arab NGOs urged to strengthen cooperation, mobilise opinion

By Hind-Lara Mango  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A two-day workshop ended Wednesday by stressing the need to strengthen cooperation among Arab non-governmental organisations (NGOs) at the local, national and international levels to build effective networking.

With European Union backing, the Friedrich Naumann Foundation in Amman and the Beirut-based International Management and Training Institute (IMTI) launched the BUNIAN project last year to coordinate efforts of local NGOs working in the Arab World.

Representatives from over 30 NGOs in the region and the EU, who attended the workshop on "strategic options of cooperation between Arab and European NGOs," said they felt that the development of Arab NGOs should be brought about by pioneering projects for sustainable development,

institution building, and resource development, as "NGOs at the end of this century have become a third social and economic power able to take part in development among the private and governmental sectors," Minister of Social Development Mohammad Khair Mansour said at the meeting.

To activate their roles as partners of the two other sectors in development and to be able to solve social, political, and economic problems, NGOs should enlarge their participation in sustainable development, he added.

In addition, there should be an exchange of expertise, information and knowledge with other national and international NGOs.

"All this can efficiently be achieved through networking both at the national, regional, and international levels," Dr. Mansour said.

Networking entails capacity building and transparency, concepts which appeared in

the mid-seventies to reflect the operations and activities of NGOs for better coordination and cooperation.

The first network was established in 1976 with the creation of the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE), followed by the Asian Health Group in the early 1980s. Last year, the Arab NGO Network was officially launched.

"The Arab NGO Network, the first actual networking experience in the Arab World, resulted from a conference in 1989," said Abdullah Khatib, president of the General Union of Voluntary Societies (GUVS).

Representatives of Arab NGOs said they believed that civil society in many Arab countries did not give due attention to their organisations and their role in the development process.

The lack of clear cut networking strategies was another challenge facing the region, they added.

In discussing the relationship between Arab NGOs and their European partners, Jean Dib Hajj, director of the IMTI, noted that major gaps had to be bridged between the two sides.

These include communication problems as well as gaps in the exchange of experience, the lack of transparency in the work of European NGOs working in the Middle East, and the donor-recipient dynamic governing their relationship.

"Arab NGOs don't attempt to influence European NGO policies and priorities. They also don't give due emphasis to presenting themselves properly to the European NGO constituencies," Mr. Hajj told the Jordan Times.

NGOs need to play a more active role in mobilising public opinion, according to Ramon Mestres, economic councillor at the European Commission delegation in Amman.

Over the past 20 years, the EC has helped finance 31 projects by Jordanian NGOs at a

total cost of over \$2.5 million.

"One of the main objectives of the EU is to fight poverty and to improve living conditions in the less developed countries," Mr. Mestres said.

He also stressed that NGOs should assist governments in implementing cooperation policies in development.

Simone Pott, press officer at the Deutsche Welthungerhilfe, a society that helps famine-hit areas world-wide, presented some points on the visibility of Arab NGOs and civil society in Europe.

She noted that exposure in Germany, for example, was very poor as the image of Arabs was blurred by negative stereotyping and prejudice.

"Arab NGOs have to mobilise public opinion in Europe through intensive public relations campaigns," said Mrs. Pott. She said this was vital as over 60 per cent of European funds are allocated for humanitarian projects, while the rest go to development.

## Visiting Bulgarian delegation, minister review labour issues

AMMAN (Petra) — Former Bulgarian Prime Minister Reneta Injova, head of a delegation now visiting Jordan, Wednesday discussed labour-related issues and cooperation with Minister of Labour Mohammad Farhan.

Dr. Farhan outlined Jordan's labour law, regulations concerning employment and the workforce, conditions of Jordanian workers abroad and the Kingdom's methods of settling labour disputes.

He also briefed the Bulgarian delegation on the country's labour movement, its activities and its contributions to the national economy.

Dr. Farhan and Ms. Injova expressed desire to develop

Jordanian-Bulgarian cooperation in labour fields.

Also Wednesday, Ms. Injova, who is accompanied by Bulgarian union leaders and economists, held a meeting with Haidar Murad, chairperson of the Federation of Jordanian Chambers of Commerce, who briefed her on the federation's achievements and plans.

Mr. Murad spoke in detail about laws which offer incentives to foreign investors in Jordan. He noted that foreign investors can own up to 100 per cent of Jordanian businesses under new laws, with the exception of businesses in the trade, mining and contracting sectors, in which foreign investors can

acquire up to 50 per cent equity.

According to Mr. Murad, Jordan last year imported \$14.1 million worth of Bulgarian products and exported \$8.2 million worth of Jordanian goods. He said the balance of trade could be adjusted by increasing Bulgarian imports from Jordan and launching joint ventures between businesses of the two countries.

Ms. Injova said her country was keen on promoting relations with Jordan and increasing trade exchanges. Ms. Injova said she will provide the Jordanian private sector with information on Bulgaria's economic activities and will examine Jordan's investment climate and the market's activities.

## Netanyahu threatens to decline invitation

(Continued from page 1)

land transfer is matched by Palestinian steps including a crackdown on Islamists.

Officials indicated Israel was ready to give up to 11 per cent without risking its security, but right-wingers have vowed to bring down the government if there is a pullback larger than nine per cent.

Palestinians have accepted the U.S. plan, and senior officials took a wait-and-see attitude toward the proposed Washington talks.

"We heard from the Americans that there was progress on the part of the Israelis. They told us that the Israelis were closer to accepting the American ideas. If this is true, then this is good. We will wait and see," said Mahmoud Abbas, better known as Abu Mazen, Palestinian President Yasser Arafat's deputy.

Marwan Barghout, leader of the Fatah movement in the West Bank, called for suspending the talks altogether while warning that the alternative to peace was violence.

Meanwhile, Mr. Arafat on Wednesday criticised what he called Mr. Netanyahu's intransigence and persistent refusal to respect the Middle East accords.

Mr. Arafat was speaking after briefing Algerian Presi-

dent Liamine Zeroul on this week's London Middle East talks which failed to obtain progress on Israeli troop withdrawals.

The Palestinian president paid tribute to Algeria's support for the Palestinian cause and told journalists here: "We are convinced that peace will impose itself by the will of our people in the land of peace, Palestine, and that we will pray together, God willing, in Jerusalem."

Mr. Arafat arrived from Rabat following the London talks and was due to visit Tunis, Cairo and Amman for consultations before continuing to Washington Monday following a U.S. invitation to fresh talks.

Mr. Arafat's advisor Nabil Shaath flew into Paris Wednesday to update French leaders on the three-way Middle East peace talks in London.

French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine urged Israel to accept a U.S. peace compromise after talks with the top aide to Mr. Arafat.

"The ball is clearly in the Israeli court," Mr. Vedrine said after being briefed by Mr. Shaath.

"The Palestinian side has already accepted [a U.S. compromise proposal]. If the other side were to reject it, it would take a heavy responsibility," he

told reporters after emerging from talks with Mr. Shaath, who is also the Palestinian minister for international cooperation.

On his part, Mr. Shaath told AFP: "We are looking at different scenarios with our French friends on the application of the Oslo accords on Israel's redeployment."

He said there were three scenarios left, "progress, failure or chaos."

Conference on Arab pharmaceutical industry opens

JPA president: Jordan has more pharmacists than needed

AMMAN (Petra) — Representatives of Arab pharmacists' unions and organisations Wednesday started a three-day conference in Amman entitled: "The pharmacy profession: the present situation and the requirements of the coming century."

Organised by the Jordan Pharmacists Association (JPA), the conference is scheduled to review 62 research papers dealing with the drug industry, education, legislation, dangerous drugs, medicinal herbs, cosmetics and international agreements on pharmaceutical manufacturing, among other topics.

In his opening address, Minister of Health and Medical Care Ashraf Kurdi outlined the ministry's plans for modernising legislation to improve the quality of drugs and ensure control over production.

A special ministry committee has finalised a draft plan to this effect after consultations with the concerned public and private sector parties, Dr. Kurdi said.

He described the Ministry of Health's relations with the JPA as excellent, stressing the importance of bilateral cooperation in amending the present pharmacy law to accommodate new developments in the profession.

Samir Nouri, chairperson of the Arab Pharmacists Union, presented a proposal providing for the creation of a pan-Arab drug market, integration among pharmaceutical industries, unification of Arab medicine registration procedures, and facilities to ensure trade exchanges among the Arab states.

JPA President Abdul Rahim Issa said the number of pharmacists in the Kingdom, including more than 1,500 in the private sector alone, exceeds the country's needs.

He urged Jordanian universities to limit the number of students studying pharmacy and give more attention to quality rather than quantity.

After the inaugural session, Dr. Kurdi opened an exhibition of drugs from Jordan and other countries as well as publications on the pharmacy profession.

## what's going on

### FILMS

\* "Spanish film 'El balcon abierto' at Instituto Cervantes, Jabbal Amman on Thursday at 5:00 p.m.

### MAY FAIR

\* Annual fair of the British Ladies of Amman in the gardens of the British ambassador's residence, Zahran Street on Friday (11:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.). (It will include a grand raffle, games, entertainment, refreshments and home-made products. All proceeds will go to local charities.

### EXHIBITIONS

\* Works by Muhammad Al 'Amiri at the Jordan Writers Association building, Jabbal Weibdeh (Tel. 4621724), until May 8.

\* Works by Ecuadorian artist Olmedo Quimbata at Instituto Cervantes, Jabbal Amman, until May 12.

\* Works by Yassin Al Mohammadawi at the Orient Gallery, Shmeisani (Tel. 5681303/4), until May 7.

\* Paintings by Lebanese-American artist Etel Adnan entitled "Artist's Book of Art and Poetry" at Darat Al Funun, Jabbal Weibdeh, until May 28. Also displaying works by Berlin-based Syrian artist Marwan Bashi entitled "A Suite of Heads," and works by contemporary Arab artists.



# Milosevic offers Bosnia full ties with Yugoslavia

SARAJEVO (AFP) — Yugoslavia, isolated by the international community over its crackdown in Kosovo, is making fresh overtures to Bosnia on setting up full bilateral ties, press reports and sources said Wednesday.

In a front-page report, the Oslobođenje newspaper said Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic sent a draft joint declaration to his Bosnian counterpart Alija Izetbegovic on normalising relations.

It was hand-delivered to Mr. Izetbegovic earlier this week by Milorad Dodik, prime minister of the Bosnian Serb entity or Republika Srpska, the independent daily reported.

According to Oslobođenje, the draft asserts that the rump Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) "respects the integrity of Bosnia-Herzegovina" in accordance with the Dayton peace accords that ended the 1992-95 war in Bosnia. Both countries would set up diplomatic relations and exchange ambassadors "immediately," and agree to solve between themselves the crucial issue of ownership of assets left over from the breakup of the former Yugoslavia, "in accordance with international law."

Mr. Izetbegovic's spokesman Adamir Jarkovic refused to comment on the Oslobođenje report.

But political sources confirmed to AFP that Belgrade is sending signals that it wants to finalise an agreement on normalising relations, six years after Bosnia-Herzegovina declared its independence, which sparked the bitter and bloody Bosnian war.

Mr. Dodik, for his part,

was quoted Wednesday in another Sarajevo newspaper as saying that "conditions have been met for progress in the establishment of diplomatic relations."

"I'm willing to take part and contribute to any activities that improve the situation in the region," he told Dnevni Avaz, which is affiliated with Mr. Izetbegovic's Party of Democratic Action (SDA).

Mr. Milosevic's proposals come as the international community is putting pressure on his regime to end its crackdown on Albanian separatists in the Serbian province of Kosovo.

They also precede a key conference of donor nations in Brussels Thursday and Friday that is expected to produce \$1.1 billion in additional reconstruction aid for Bosnia.

According to the draft version of the joint declaration, Bosnia and Yugoslavia "will focus on the free and safe return" of the 1.8 million Bosnians who are still refugees from the war.

Both sides, it said, would be "determined to remove all unnecessary artificial obstacles" and ensure the "free movement of people, goods, and scientific, cultural and other values."

They would also strive for better economic and trade relations, details of which would be covered in 18 agreements that would be annexed to a final joint declaration, the newspaper said.

Missing from the draft proposal is any reference to a complaint filed in March 1993 by Bosnia — and opposed by Yugoslavia — to the International Court of Justice in The Hague.

This accused Belgrade of genocide during the war, and the case has been seen as an obstacle to establishing normal relations.

## Clashes continue between armed Albanians and Serbian police

RAKOVINA, Yugoslavia (AFP) — Clashes between armed ethnic Albanians and Serbian police in the troubled western part of Kosovo province continued Wednesday, police told reporters at a checkpoint near this Kosovo town.

"(Albanian) terrorists are crossing the road shooting," an armed policeman wearing a flakjacket told reporters who were prevented from going further towards the region of the reported clashes because of "security reasons."

Several policemen in protection gear were controlling the Rakovina checkpoint, some 20 kilometres from the region of recent bloody clashes between Serbian security forces and armed Albanians.

A policeman added that Albanian "terrorists were trying to escape from police encirclement."

Although no shooting was heard as reporters were at the checkpoint, the atmosphere seemed tense and the area looked deserted.

The clashes in this zone erupted when a Serbian police column was attacked by separatists Sunday as it wound its way through the village of Ponosevac, about five kilometres from the border.

Serbian sources said the actions in the region were aimed at destroying an cell of alleged Albanian "terrorists," and preventing arms smuggling from neighbouring

Albania. Meanwhile in Pristina, Serb and Albanian sources said that a Serb policeman and three ethnic Albanians were killed early Wednesday in clashes in Kosovo. The policeman was killed along with one of the Albanian attackers at the northern town of Kosovska Mitrovica. Two other policemen were injured, one critically, when they had come under fire around 6.00 a.m. (0400 GMT), police in the capital Pristina said.

The main Albanian party in the province, the Kosovo Democratic League (LDK), reported that two Albanians, one aged 30 and the other aged 77, had been killed, and one was wounded in the western Decani region, but did not give the circumstances. The Albanian language daily Koha Ditore meanwhile reported that the mutilated body of a 14-year-old girl had been discovered at Stari Trg, near Kosovska Mitrovica.

Kosovo's 1.8 million ethnic Albanians are demanding independence from Serbian rule of the province, whose autonomy was revoked in 1989.

More than 110 ethnic Albanians and at least 14 Serbs, among them ten policemen, have been killed since March, when Serbian security forces launched a crackdown on armed Albanian separatists in Kosovo.



Italian Carabinieri help an elderly man who had fallen in a mud-covered street in Siano, south of Naples after two days of torrential rains sent rivers of mud and rocks rampaging through towns in Italy's southern Campania region. At least five people were killed and a number were missing after 48 hours of non-stop rain caused rivers to break their banks sending cars floating along village streets, knocking into houses and trees (Reuters photo)

## Flooding and landslides leave 16 dead in Italy

ROME (AFP) — At least 16 people died in landslides and flooding in southern Italy following torrential rains and many more are missing, authorities said Wednesday.

"The number of missing runs into dozens and the final toll is unfortunately bound to be higher," the director general of the civil protection service, Giulio Manichedda told reporters.

The fatalities occurred overnight Tuesday in the Campania region, in the mountainous hinterland behind the city of Naples. Heavy rains have pounded central and southern Italy for days.

"Four helicopters and 1,000 firemen have been sent to the worst hit areas between Caserte, Benevento and Avellino, where 3,000 people have had to be evacuated from

their homes, a spokesman for the civil protection service said.

Torrents of mud and stones have swept through the small villages of Sarno, Siano, Quindici and Bracigliano.

At Siano, near Salerno, four people died when they were carried away by a mudslide. At Sarno, 2,000 of the village's 3,000 inhabitants fled their homes when mud poured down the hillside and even found its way into the local clinic, killing the security guard. Wednesday morning the body of a man was pulled out of the mud by a mechanical digger.

The car of a fireman was found buried in the mud. The fireman was lucky in telephone contact with his colleagues, who were trying to pull the vehicle out by helicopter.

Landslips and flooding

left five people dead and several missing in the village of Quindici, near Avellino, while at San Felice a Cancellaro, near Caserte, a 73-year-old woman was crushed to death in her home by a flood of mud and stones.

The bodies of a woman and her three children were found in Bracigliano, the city hall there said.

Wednesday morning rain was still falling, hampering rescue efforts, but weathermen said the downpour would ease off during the day and stop completely by the evening.

The railway stations at Sarno and Codola "were closed because of flooding."

Every year, bad weather claims dozens of lives in Italy in the north and south because of heavy rain causing major flooding, landslips and mud slides.

## Ranariddh commander to negotiate rejoining government forces

BANGKOK (AFP) — The main Cambodian royalist commander said Wednesday he would begin talks on reintegrating his troops with government forces under power.

"We have been in contact with the government, and one of my subordinates will go to Phnom Penh tomorrow, and begin talks on Saturday," General Nhiek Bun Chhay told AFP from his northern Cambodia stronghold at O Smach.

"There will be five members from each side at the negotiation," said Nhiek Bun Chhay who was forced to leave Phnom Penh along with troops in July last year when Hun Sen ousted first premier Prince Norodom Ranariddh.

"The success will not come in one meeting," the general said, "but we hope we will have some progress which will lead to another meeting."

Nhiek Bun Chhay said his team would make five proposals, including a ceasefire and an amnesty for royalist officers indicted on criminal charges with the prince last year by Hun Sen's government.

The royalist general himself is still wanted by the government for allegedly colluding with Khmer Rouge rebels, who are currently fighting Hun Sen's troops near the Thai border, just before last July's violent ouster of Prince Ranariddh.

The Thai foreign ministry said Hun Sen, who arrived in Bangkok for talks with the Thai government Wednesday, had begun moves for a ceasefire during national elections scheduled for July 26.

"They have set up a negotiating team," foreign ministry spokesman Kobsak Chintakul told AFP Wednesday.

Nhiek Bun Chhay said some 1,600 Khmer Rouge troops had contacted him wanting to join forces loyal to Prince Ranariddh, although he had not yet been given the go-ahead by the prince.

However, he denied earlier reports his royalist forces were to link up with Khmer Rouge hardline leaders Khieu Samphan and Nuon Chea at the strategic mountain Ta Tum, near O Smach.

"They are not in Ta Tum and they never contacted me to join my forces," he said.

The exact whereabouts of the two Khmer Rouge leaders and feared one-legged Khmer Rouge military chief Ta Mok were unknown.

The Thai foreign ministry spokesman confirmed the ceasefire talks were part of a Japanese-brokered peace plan for Cambodia which called for a ceasefire, a pardon for the ousted prince, a reintegration of royalist troops into the armed forces and cutting ties with the Khmer Rouge.

Meanwhile, Khmer Rouge forces were being pressured by Phnom Penh troops in areas surrounding two strategic passes on the mountainous border.

Government forces were shelling Khmer Rouge positions near the guerrillas' former stronghold of Anlong Veng, 16 kilometres south of the border, a senior Thai official said.

"Although the fighting is heavy, the Khmer Rouge is still resisting," the official told AFP, adding he could not confirm any casualties.

Khmer Rouge radio, monitored in Bangkok Wednesday, said fighting between hardline guerrillas and government forces, whom the rebels regard as controlled by old-time rivals Vietnam, had intensified.

"Vietnamese communists and Hun Sen are starting grandiose military operations to destroy all national forces in order to easily implement their dictatorial measures," the radio report said.

## 17 people killed in Kashmir violence

JAMMU, India (AFP) — Seventeen people, including three police officers, were killed in a series of attacks in the Kashmir region Wednesday, police said.

Security forces in the region were on high alert after a series of attacks in the past few days.

Police killed a militant in a gun battle in the town of Baramulla.

Another militant was killed in a gun battle in the town of Srinagar.

A third militant was killed in a gun battle in the town of Jammu.

The attacks were part of a series of attacks in the region.

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## U.S. Congress plans hearings on missile technology to China

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The U.S. Congress is planning hearings into whether the White House's satellite policy allowed U.S. firms to improve China's nuclear missile technology. The Washington Post said Wednesday.

The hearings in the Republican-led Senate and House of Representatives would span several committees and focus on President Bill Clinton's decision to allow two U.S. aerospace companies to export satellites for launch atop Chinese satellites.

Both firms, Hughes Electronics and Loral Space and Communications, have been heavy contributors to the Democratic Party — Loral's chief executive officer Bernard Schwartz was the single largest donor to the party in 1996 (\$632,000), the daily said.

Republican lawmakers are attempting to find a link between the financial contributions and a decision by

Mr. Clinton in February granting Loral permission to launch another satellite and provide China with the same type of information that was the subject of a Justice Department inquiry, the daily said.

The Justice Department probe followed a New York Times report last month on a Pentagon document alleging that sensitive information was turned over to the Chinese during the course of a probe into the February 15, 1996, crash of a Chinese rocket carrying a \$200 million Loral satellite.

The U.S. scientists shared with their Chinese counterparts information on electronic flight control system that could be used for China's nuclear missiles, the Times said, quoting unnamed U.S. officials.

House Speaker Newt Gingrich and Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott have taken an active interest in the congressional probes, the Post said Wednesday.

Representative Dana Rohrabacher, who heads the

House Science subcommittee on space and aeronautics said she has been authorised by Mr. Gingrich to take the lead in the congressional probe.

Mr. Gingrich, the Republican for California, said in an interview he "is very focused on this issue. He believes it's going to emerge as an issue far more important than any White House sex scandals."

"It's embarrassing to talk about a sex scandal. There's nothing embarrassing about calling the president to task about the giveaway of American technology to the Red Chinese," Ms. Rohrabacher added.

Beijing last month dismissed the allegations, describing the technical exchanges between the U.S. firms and China's space industry as "normal activities in line with international practice."

"There exists no question of furnishing missile technology here," a Chinese foreign ministry spokesman said on April 16.

## Australian captain averts major catastrophe

PERTH, Australia (AFP) — An Australian naval commander may have sacrificed four crew inside a blazing engine room to save the supply ship Westralia and avert a major disaster, reports said Wednesday.

The three men and a woman probably died in the initial blast caused by a ruptured fuel line, but any hope of rescue evaporated with the order to seal the room and activate a carbon dioxide drench, starving the space of oxygen.

"Commander Dietrich had no way of knowing if the missing sailors were alive or dead," Sydney's Daily Telegraph said.

Nine other sailors were injured Tuesday in one of Australia's worst peacetime naval accidents.

Defence Minister Ian McLachlan expressed sympathy to the families of those killed and injured and also for the captain, Commander Stuart Dietrich.

"He had a decision to make and I'm not going to make any judgements about it," the minister said.

"I'm told that decision was made 20 minutes after the explosion and it must have been a very difficult decision."

"But, he must have been extremely worried that 20 minutes was putting the whole of the rest of the ship in danger with that enormous amount of fuel on board."

The 40,870 tonne Westralia, the Australian navy's largest vessel, was fully laden with 20,000 tonnes of fuel ahead of deployment in South East Asia.

## China pulls licences of iodine pill makers after 17,000 poisoned

BEIJING (AFP) — China's health ministry yanked the licences of all producers of iodine supplements after 17,000 school children were poisoned by the pills, reports said Wednesday.

The ministry said that products already approved by local health departments were also covered by the order, the China Daily reported. "Violators of state laws and regulations concerned must be seriously punished," Health Minister Zhang Wenkang was quoted as saying.

Children in 11 provinces across China fell ill after being given iodine supplements at schools in early April.

The majority of cases occurred even after the health ministry issued a warning to schools on April 4 to restrict the administering of such products.

Some 6,300 pupils in the city of Lanzhou, in western Gansu province suffered symptoms including nausea, vomiting, abdominal pains, dizziness and nose bleeds, and some had to be hospitalised.

They had been given iodine supplements despite an urgent ban on the medication issued by health authorities.

Profit appear to have played a role in the school's decision to issue the supplements despite the directive. The pills were sold to students in

Lanzhou for 0.77 yuan apiece (9.4 cents), while the normal price of the tablets on the market was 0.10 yuan apiece, the official Guangming Daily reported.

Similar cases have been reported in Shandong, Anhui, Sichuan and Henan provinces, with a total of 17,000 children affected.

The initial warning was prompted after an outbreak of illnesses occurred in north-eastern Shandong province after children were given iodine supplements. The supplements were not licensed by the health ministry, but precisely what was wrong with the pills has not been disclosed.

## Blair camp

BELFAST (AFP) — Prime Minister Tony Blair and his Conservative cabinet are expected to meet Wednesday to discuss the political situation in Northern Ireland.

Blair is expected to support the peace process.

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## 17 people killed in Kashmir violence

JAMMU, India (AFP) — Seventeen people, including three policemen, were killed and two others injured in violence in India's troubled Himalayan region overnight, police said Wednesday.

Suspected Muslim militants opened fire overnight on a Hindu family in Surankot town in the border district of Poonch, 225 kilometres north of Kashmir's winter capital Jammu, killing five members of the family.

"All the five male members of the family were killed instantly. Two others were critically injured," a police spokesman said.

Witnesses said Hindu families in the region broke a police curfew and went on a march early Wednesday demanding action against the killers.

Last month 26 Hindus were massacred by Muslim guerrillas at Barankot village in Udhampur district of the state. That led to an exodus of hundreds of Hindus to neighbouring districts.

Police said in the Doda district of the state four villagers were shot dead by Muslim militants.

"As the rebels started to flee, the villagers retaliated and in the gunbattle two militants and a civilian were also killed," a police spokesman said.

Early Wednesday militants, fighting for an independent homeland, also fired at the funeral procession of the five villagers.

"Militants attacked the procession with grenades and automatic weapons killing three policemen and two civilians," the spokesman said.

He said ten people in the procession were missing and villagers allege that they were abducted by the militants.

A Hindu nationalist leader, in a statement here, blamed Pakistan for "carrying out ethnic cleansing so that Islamic rule is established in parts of Jammu region."

D.K. Kotwal, president of the right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, Indian People's Party) said the Muslim rebels were "acting at the behest of Pakistan."

In the past six months, at least 30 Hindus have been killed by Muslim separatists fighting for Kashmir's secession from India. The rebel drive has claimed more than 20,000 lives in the disputed state since 1989.

During the nine-year-old struggle more than 300,000 Hindus have left the state and have either moved to the winter capital and Hindu-dominated Jammu region or New Delhi.

The troubled areas of Kashmir should be handed over to the Indian troops for flushing out the rebels", Mr. Kotwal said.

India accuses neighbouring Pakistan of fomenting the Muslim insurgency. Islamabad says its support is limited to diplomatic backing for the call for self-rule.

Muslim insurgent groups want a U.N.-brokered referendum to decide the future of Kashmir, the only Muslim-dominated state in Hindu-majority India. Some groups want a merger with Pakistan while others want independence.



Police kick and hit with rifle butts while arresting an opposition activist during a general strike in Bangladesh capital Dhaka. The half-day, countrywide strike was organised by main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and its allies in protest against a treaty the government has recently signed with tribal rebels in southeastern Chittagong Hill Tracts (Reuters photo)

## Blair and Major spearhead campaign for Irish peace yes vote

BELFAST (AFP) — British Prime Minister Tony Blair and his Conservative predecessor John Major were flying to Northern Ireland Wednesday in a rare show of political unity to rally support for the province's peace accord.

Mr. Blair and Mr. Major, who played key roles in securing the April 10 agreement, were urging the electorate to give a huge "Yes" vote in the May 22 referendum, which if approved will be followed in June by elections to a local assembly.

Putting political differences behind them, they were due to share a platform together to call on the people of Northern Ireland to take what Mr. Blair has called the best chance for peace in the province in decades.

Mr. Blair, who turned 45 Wednesday, is expected to return to the province again shortly before the referendum with current Conservative leader William Hague and Liberal Democrat leader Paddy Ashdown.

Mr. Blair and Mr. Major will hold a question and answer session with students in Belfast and Mr. Blair will visit a local police station. Mr. Major is to address a chamber of commerce meeting.

Mr. Major, who helped initiate the peace process with the Downing Street Declaration of December 1993, will deliver a keynote speech warning that a rejection of the accord risked condemning the whole

community to a continuation of the miseries of the past 30 years, and a conflict which has claimed more than 3,200 lives.

London and Dublin are hoping for a big "yes" vote to make the agreement credible and marginalise Protestant extremists.

A recent survey suggested that Protestants are 31 per cent in favour of the accord, with 45 per cent undecided and 24 per cent against.

By contrast, 80 per cent of Roman Catholics are in favour of the agreement, according to an Irish television programme poll of 850 people.

Rival campaigns moved into top gear Wednesday with the independent "yes" campaign calling on the top advertising firm Saatchi and Saatchi, who designed their billboard campaign free of charge.

It depicts two contrasting road signs — an arrow with the slogan "Vote Yes. Its the way ahead" beside a "No Through Road" sign.

The United Unionist "No" campaign was formally launched with a claim that backing for the deal would put Northern Ireland on the road to a united Ireland.

Under the slogan, "It's right to say No", the group represents nine of the 13 Ulster Unionist MPs. It also includes the Reverend Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionists, the U.K. Unionists and dissident Protestant Ulster Unionists who refuse to follow party leader David Trimble on the "Yes" campaign trail.

The Protestant Orange Order, which has 80,000 members in Ulster and a large membership which overlaps with Trimble's Ulster Unionists, has also urged its members and supporters to vote no.

Sinn Fein, the political wing of the Irish Republican Army, will hold a special session May 10 to decide how to tell its followers to vote. But it is expected to recommend a "yes."

It was reportedly given the green light at the weekend when a secret IRA meeting in Ireland changed its constitution to allow Sinn Fein to take part in a future Northern Ireland assembly.

The BBC and two London newspapers reported that the IRA, whose goal is a united Ireland, has abandoned the long-standing principle in its constitution of boycotting all "partitionist" bodies.

Sinn Fein can now follow suit by agreeing to take seats in a future Belfast assembly and participate in a devolved administration.

Sinn Fein leaders Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness have not taken their seats as MPs in the British parliament in London, refusing to swear allegiance to the British Crown.

Belfast City Council also voted by a large majority in favour of the Stormont peace agreement Tuesday night.

## 100 injured as clashes erupt during Bangladesh strike

DHAKA (AFP) — About 100 people were injured Wednesday by home-made bombs or in clashes with police wielding tear gas and rubber bullets during a six-hour opposition-led nationwide general strike.

In old parts of Dhaka, where there is a major concentration of opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) supporters, police went into action after strikers hurled home-made bombs and stones at them and at anti-strikers, one local reporter at the scene said.

A chase ensued for an hour, but the activists were dispersed by police as they fled through the narrow lanes of the overcrowded area, where tension remained high.

About 70 people, including policemen and journalists, received minor injuries either after being

hit by stones or bomb splinters after the fifteen others were wounded in sporadic violence elsewhere.

In most parts of Dhaka, supporters of the ruling Awami League of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed staged marches against the strike, while several from former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's BNP were also seen.

Bangladeshis will return to work fully only Sunday, as Thursday is a public holiday and the weekend takes in Friday and Saturday.

The strike ended at 12:00 noon (0600 GMT) and life quickly returned to normal with traffic back on the streets as usual.

The latest action was announced after Sheikh Hasina's government tabled four bills in parliament this week to give legal cover to the treaty for

immediate passage, prompting protest walkouts by BNP MPs. The bills will come into force after President Shahabuddin Ahmad gives his assent.

A large number of rickshaws continued to operate across the city during the stoppage, while taxis, tempos and buses plied in Mahakhali, Motijheel and Farmgate areas, some of them driven by pro-government supporters.

The action forced schools and most shops and businesses to close, but many private offices were open with their from shutters down, employees said.

Thousands of police backed by paramilitary troops were on guard in Dhaka's streets.

The stoppage was also enforced in other major Bangladeshi cities, but there were no immediate reports of violence.

Ms. Zia reportedly Tuesday said, without elaborating, that if the treaty was implemented it might plunge Bangladesh into "civil war situations like Lebanon and Sri Lanka" and urged President Ahmad not to sign the bills.

For her part Sheikh Hasina has accused the opposition of trying to keep unrest alive in the hills and said it was beneficial to only those who were involved in smuggling, including marijuana and weapons.

The government denies opposition charges, but says it is prepared to accept any amendment if they were "fundamental in nature and contained substance."

The government says 2,500 people died in the protracted rebel revolt, although Ms. Zia put the figure at 20,000.

## Spanish politician killed by suspected Basque gunman

PAMPLONA, Spain (AFP) — A suspected Basque separatist gunman killed a local politician Wednesday in the Basque city of Pamplona, officials said.

The 62-year-old man died in hospital after being shot twice in the head as he walked along a street near his house, they said.

Police identified him as Tomas Caballero, spokesman for a regional party, the Union of the People of Navarra. In the city council, Navarra is a Basque province of which Pamplona is the capital.

Police said they suspected the Basque extremist group ETA was behind the attack.

The group has been targeting local-level conservative politicians since the middle of last year. Caballero is the fifth to die since July. In Navarra

his party is allied with the centre-right Popular Party of Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar.

The last such attack came on Jan. 30 with the killing of the deputy mayor of Seville and his wife.

The first was that of a young Basque councillor in the town of Erna last July. His death triggered nationwide outpourings of disgust with ETA and huge street rallies against Basque separatist violence.

So far this year ETA attacks have left four dead, including Caballero.

His death comes in the wake of the arrest of six people accused of belonging to an ETA commando group that interior ministry officials said had been considering an assassination attempt against King Juan Carlos.

## 1 killed, 2 injured in Indonesian riot

MEDAN, Indonesia (AFP) — A teenage boy was believed to have been killed Wednesday, shot in the head by security forces during riots in this Indonesian city which also left two others injured, witnesses said.

Two women sheltering in shops said they saw two boys on a motorcycle shot by a plain clothes security man with a pistol as he chased on his motorcycle down a small alley in the centre of the capital of North Sumatra.

The driver was shot in head and fell to the ground, while his passenger was shot in the arm in the shooting near the Kemiri central market, they told AFP.

"This happened right out-

side my house and we even took the motorcycle in for a moment. Later his elder brother came and he was crying and he said 'my brother is dead', one of the women said asking not to be named.

She said she saw the dead boy fall to the ground, but did not know what had happened to him.

The reports could not immediately be confirmed as police could not be contacted.

Another witness said another boy was shot in the leg by another plainclothes man nearby during the riots over fuel price increases.

Violence flared for the third day, as residents protested fuel price hikes which have seen costs increase by 71 per cent.



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WINNING THE HEARTS OF THE WORLD

## S. Lanka beefs up laws to deal with child molesters

COLOMBO (AFP) — Sri Lanka Wednesday enacted tougher laws to protect children against sexual abuse, making crimes against minors a non-bailable offence even if the act is committed abroad.

The Sri Lankan parliament unanimously approved the amendments to four existing pieces of legislation that will make sex with children and using children for illegal purposes a serious criminal offence.

Having sex with children below the age of 16 years even with their consent will be considered an offence and police will be empowered to make arrests without a warrant.

Opposition leader Ranil Wickremesinghe supporting the tough laws called for their strict implementation amid reports of increased child abuse by locals as well as foreigners.

People accused of sexual offences against children will have no right to bail until their cases are disposed of.

Under the amended laws, photo studios will be compelled to inform the local police of any obscene films given to them for developing or printing and those who fail to co-operate will get two years in jail.

The new laws also give powers to the authorities to

prosecute any one who has had sex with children even while staying abroad.

Using children for begging or trafficking in drugs will attract a minimum jail term of five years.

"This is being done in the greater interest of society," Justice Minister G. L. Peiris said in February when the cabinet first approved the amendment before sending them to parliament for incorporating them in to statute books.

"We hope these measures will have a very salutary effect in curbing this very serious problem of child abuse."

He said the government move to tighten the already strict laws were taken independently of ongoing police investigation into charges of paedophilia against British-born sci-fi guru Arthur C. Clarke, who has made Sri Lanka his adopted home since 1956.

Sri Lankan police have sought help from Interpol to investigate the allegations against Clarke, first made out in a British newspaper in February.

Child rights group PEACE said there were an estimated 30,000 abused children in the country and about a third of them were being "bought and sold" by paedophiles.

## At least 13 survive Peruvian plane crash

LIMA (AFP) — There are at least 13 survivors among the 87 people aboard an Air Force Boeing 737 chartered by the oil firm Occidental Petroleum which crashed in a jungle, the U.S. firm said Wednesday.

The airliner went down Tuesday en route between Iquitos, 1,005 kilometres northeast of Lima, to Andoas, 312 kilometres to the west, in Peru's oil-rich jungle region.

It crashed some five kilometres short of its final destination at around 9:30 p.m. (0230 GMT Wednesday), the air force said.

The plane's 79 passengers were Occidental employees, contract workers and civilian support personnel, a company statement said.



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## Lift off or meltdown?

IF THE London peace talks under the auspices of British Prime Minister Tony Blair and U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright have culminated in neither a breakthrough nor a breakdown, what did they lead to? Pessimists have described the talks with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as constituting a meltdown in the peace process. Others saw in them a new window of opportunity to advance the stalled peace negotiations between the two sides. In effect, though, the London round was not only about the much-talked about second-stage Israeli redeployment from Palestinian territories but rather on issues relating to the final status talks. It seems Israel wanted to know well in advance what the U.S. proposal for a 13 per cent withdrawal would lead to at the end of the tunnel. This has always been Netanyahu's game, which he is playing by insisting that time is ripe for final status talks here and now. The Palestinians have no vested interest in mixing the second-stage negotiations with the final status talks for fear of sacrificing what territory they should be getting during the interim period. Netanyahu is also interested in negotiating a string of issues ranging from the size of the Palestinian police force to assurances that the Palestinian National Authority would not opt to declare an independent state in 1999, the year when final status talks are supposed to be concluded. By meshing the second-stage and the final status talks, Netanyahu would in effect succeed in imposing his own strategy on the two sides.

Both the Palestinians and the Israelis appear to have accepted Albright's invitation to Washington for continuing the work there. President Bill Clinton's personal intervention might make the difference this time — that is in the assumption that Netanyahu is not all out to wreck the peace process at all costs, anyway.

## ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

**Al Dustour's** Oreib Rintawi addressed on the failed outcome of the London meeting saying the Albright-Ross efforts were futile as was expected not due to Arafat who accepted the American proposals but due to Netanyahu's refusal to withdraw his troops from 13 per cent of the occupied West Bank, said the writer. As for Arafat, he is going back to Gaza weaker and more desperate and less able to confront the elements of extremism in the self-rule areas of Palestine, according to Rintawi. In contrast, Netanyahu will seem stronger as he has defied the U.S. and the world which want him to comply with the U.N. resolutions and the peace accords, he said. The writer said it remains to be seen whether the Arab World will now rally behind Arafat in the face of the Israeli arrogance and the American failures, adding that the U.S. has to realise now that the Arab countries may not maintain their alliance with it and continue to safeguard its interests.

**Al Ra'i's** Ibrahim Absi reflected on the outcome of a recent survey in the U.S. which showed that two-thirds of the American people oppose the attitude of the U.S. Congress which is known to be biased towards Israel. The writer said the Congress is making it difficult for the U.S. administration to manoeuvre freely or to force Israel to withdraw from 13 per cent of the West Bank lands as Washington had suggested. He said this opposition strengthens the American president's stand and offers him a chance to pressure Israel without being influenced by the Congress. It is in the interest of the U.S. and its people to see U.N. resolutions implemented and peace prevailing, and it is in the interest of the U.S. administration to safeguard America's interests in this region. Therefore be said the U.S. is duty bound as a peace broker and the sole superpower to seek ways to establish peace in the Middle East.

## View from Academia

# Reform, development can proceed regardless of peace

Dr. Ahmad Y. Majdoubeh

AS THE Mideast peace process experiences a current chilling stalemate, it is extremely difficult to even contemplate the benefits of peace, let alone expect them to materialise. Nevertheless, peace has, in part, happened, and its benefits have, in part again, started to emerge.

One important benefit (you may, more accurately, call it side-effect) to the portion of the overall Mideast peace that has so far come about is the process of self-appraisal and self-reform that followed the signing of bilateral peace agreements with Israel.

As peace became an inevitable reality in the early 90s, Arab countries started (suddenly) to reflect seriously on their qualifications, capabilities, and ability to survive, compete and thrive (economically, politically, socially, culturally, etc.) and the problems and challenges that stand in the way of true development and progress. Reform — which existed either in our minds, our oral and written discourse or in our dreams — became (suddenly, again) a daily concern and a priority.

The general feeling was that we had postponed looking into so many problems (because of the Arab-Israeli conflict, wars, or the no-peace/no-war situation that prevailed for so long) that upon the emergence of peace-making and peace-building we found ourselves, abruptly and without much warning, confronting an ocean of obstacles, impediments, and problems which had accumulated over the years and that needed speedy action.

The benefit of peace-making, then as well as now, lies in a) the realistic view of ourselves that came with it (i.e., the realisation that not enough has actually been done with regard to overall development and progress) and b) the feeling that obstacles, impediments, problems, and challenges need to be addressed urgently. The rain-check we enjoyed during the destructive years of the Arab-Israeli conflict we could not afford to keep

enjoying.

The minute the peace process was launched and peace agreements began to be signed we started to stare problems in the face. We found many obstacles and problems in all spheres and realms: infrastructure, services, communication technologies, income-generating projects, investment attraction, investment laws, employee efficiency, tourism facilities, funds, etc. And we started to worry about the qualifications and weaknesses of our educational institutions, the ability of our society to cope with the "other," etc.

This is not to say, of course, that we started thinking about development and progress seriously only after the signing of peace agreements. No. We in Jordan have been implementing viable, reliable and excellent development plans since the early seventies. But the feeling of urgency, of the need to tackle problems head on, and the noticeable increase in the momentum of tackling problems; all of these are mainly attributed (directly as well as indirectly) to peace.

It is true that there was (there still is) some fear of peace (mainly in relation to our ability to compete, survive, and excel); but there was also a resolve to survive, compete and excel — as well as a realisation that you cannot hide behind excuses and pretexts. That was (and still is) positive; that was (and still is) a direct benefit (a side effect?) of peace.

So?

Well, the point to underscore here is that even though the peace process seems to be dragging on forever, and even though the present (nasty) stalemate may give the impression that peace may not materialise after all, we should not stop or slow the momentum (the feeling of urgency) of tackling problems that became a priority

with the advent of peace. You never know when the peace process (which is almost totally frozen now, despite the efforts that are being exerted) begins to move in the right direction — and when ice begins to thaw, it thaws quickly.

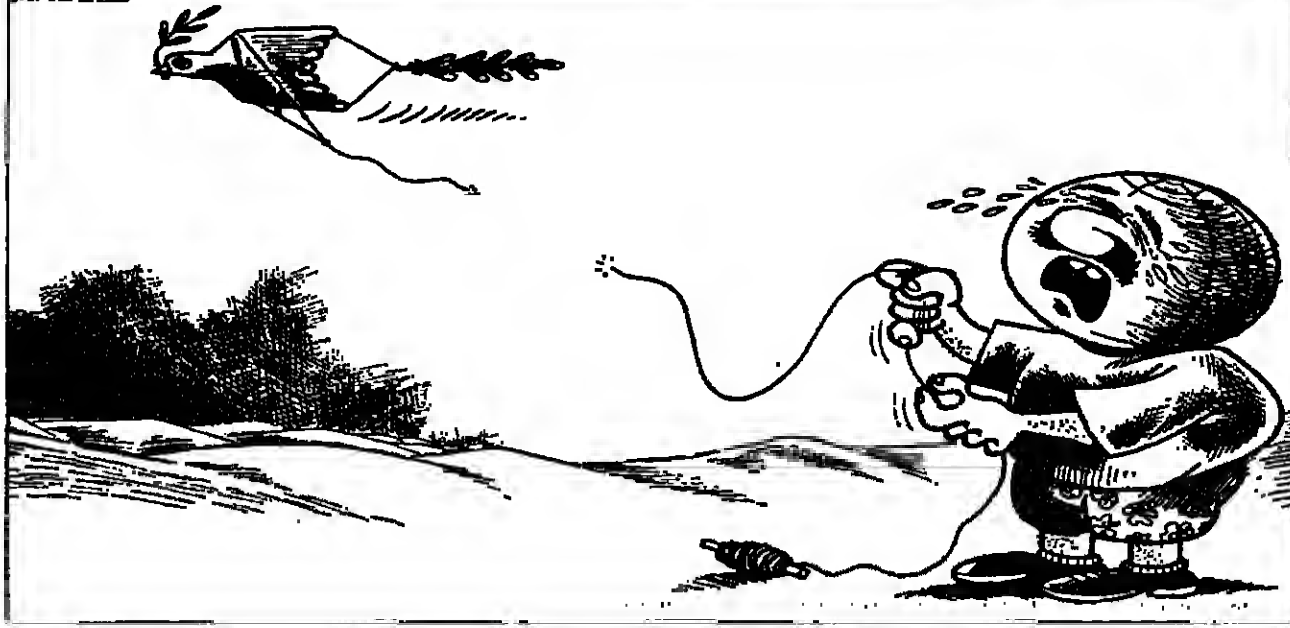
I am not necessarily saying that the momentum has come to an end or that we have stopped pursuing serious reforms. No. We still talk about impediments to investment, and we are doing something to make the climate more conducive to it; we still talk about expanding services, and we are making life more convenient at that level. We are erecting hotels, opening new roads, importing new technologies, etc.

What I am saying, rather, is that the stalemate in the peace process has, apparently, resulted in a noticeable slackening of the momentum we have witnessed in the past few years, the sense of urgency we have come to appreciate, and the enthusiasm or devotion which has become visible.

This is harmful. We have started a good thing. Let's see it through. Let's keep up the momentum and the feeling of urgency. Time is a crucial factor. Rather than take three years to do something (i.e., when our enthusiasm or devotion abates), let's do it in one year. The feeling of frustration with peace-making among some should not affect our reform, development and progress planning in any way. We need either to separate peace and development, and thus pursue reform and development as if it had nothing to do with peace; or we need to link them together in a positive way, realising that peace may materialise any moment.

We have to find ourselves again unprepared, caught without specific plans and without enough reform. Peace is a must and it will eventually materialise (whatever shape it takes); let's be fully prepared for it.

M. KAHIL



## Letter from Scotland

# Drawing parallels can be dangerous

By Peter Hinchcliffe

WE ARE now back in our house in the Scottish borders having had a productive and exciting three months in Northern Ireland. I say exciting as we were privileged to witness from close up the tense inter-party and inter-government negotiations which lead to Northern Ireland's peace deal. Negotiations, which culminated in a 48-hour virtual non-stop session of talks in which both the prime minister of Britain and of Ireland actively participated. Happily this is a deal which seems likely to be endorsed by the people of Northern Ireland in a referendum next month although the extremists on both sides may yet do their best (or worst) to try and prevent this happening. Happily and hopefully the agreement to which all significant party leaders have put their signature will finally bring to an end what has euphemistically been called "the Troubles." Around 3,600 people have died in the last 30 years — most of them civilians and a fair proportion for no other reason than as a Catholic or as a Protestant they were the victims of sectarian killings and happened to present soft targets to ruthless killers.

The inevitable comparisons are being made between Oslo and the Middle East Peace Process (MEPP) and what is happening in Northern Ireland or Ulster as the province is called. Parallels there are and much was made of them in the international and local media because of the coincidence of British Prime Minister Tony Blair's visit to the Middle East fresh from his successful peace brokerage in Belfast. In both cases sheer exhaustion and a realisation that violence was getting nowhere were important factors. Also Irish negotiators, like the Arabs and Israelis before them realised that the reasonable hope of getting something they wanted was better than the certainty of endlessly achieving nothing. Again in both cases none of the parties could point to total success — party leaderships had to convince their followers that a deal, although far from totally satisfactory had enough basis to lead to a just and lasting solution and therefore worth supporting.

The Irish nationalists in Northern Ireland — amongst them Sinn Fein and therefore the IRA — have more or less (tacitly at least and for the moment at any rate) abandoned their dream of a united Ireland ruled from Dublin. The Protestant Unionists, although they have an undertaking that the political entity of Northern Ireland will remain intact, have had to accept (to them the unpalatable fact)

that the Irish government in Dublin will have a formal role in Northern Irish affairs through cross border institutions. By the same token the Palestinians through "Gaza and Jericho First" had the prospect of eventual statehood foreshadowed through Oslo. And the Israelis could welcome a formula bringing them the hope of living in lasting peace with their Arab neighbours.

In both events the devil is in the detail — and in some cases in the lack of clarity and precision. Oslo postponed (and for the moment ducked) to the final status negotiations some of the most intractable of the outstanding problems: Jerusalem, refugees and the final shape and therefore status of "Palestine." The Northern Ireland agreement has yet to find an acceptable formula for several tricky and emotive issues. The release of prisoners — all former terrorists from one point of view or the other. Some of them guilty of the most savage killings. The "decommissioning" (taking out of circulation) of paramilitary weapons to ensure that it is the halloo box which matters, not the bullet. And, thirdly, the reform of the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) the police force whose membership is 93 per cent Protestant and has over the course of the "Troubles" been too closely associated with the Unionists to earn the confidence of the Nationalist — mainly Catholic minority. As we have seen post Oslo it does not need much to build up or even destroy the peace process especially when confidence or hope diminishes and extremists exploit anxieties or create them for their own destructive ends. But at the moment there is widespread, if cautious, optimism in Northern Ireland about the prospects for real peace — rather like the feelings I remember so hopefully expressed on the West Bank in the immediate aftermath of Oslo. In Ulster I like to believe that they are well founded.

Reading the Arab and Israeli press following Mr. Blair's recent regional tour is a depressing experience. The right wing Israeli media is urging Europe (seen as instinctively pro-Arab) to keep out of the negotiations. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu seemed to look at the London summit on May 4 as mostly about economics. The Arab media although welcoming European involvement as a counter weight to Washington, seems to believe that Mr. Blair has played into Israeli hands by encouraging the illusion of movement without progress. Certainly more column inches were devoted favourably to British Foreign

Minister Robin Cook's confrontation with the Israeli authorities during his stormy visit to Jerusalem than to Mr. Blair's less eventful journeying. The British press, by contrast — the tabloids rather than the more serious papers — have hailed Mr. Blair's success in bringing both Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Yasser Arafat to London implying that some of the Belfast magic has rubbed off on the MEPP.

In some ways it was an unhappy coincidence that sent Mr. Blair to the region so soon after his triumph in Belfast. Expectations that his magic wand could work so far from home were unrealistically high. Ireland is not Palestine. Similarities there are, but to take the parallels too far can be dangerously misleading. Britain has clout in Ireland. But Britain alone or Britain as temporary president of the European Union (EU) no longer can call the shots in the Levant. Mr. Blair was right to stress his unwillingness to cut across American lines. Mr. Netanyahu was also right (sadly) to dampen expectations of any likely dramatic breakthrough in London. EU and U.S. efforts have to be complementary and not contradictory. Points scoring by, e.g., the French, does not advance the cause of peace. EU financial support for the Palestinians does, as would U.S. pressure on Israel if only they could bring themselves to do it. But only they can. And I wish they would.

Mr. Blair does have a role. One best pursued in private when talking to the principal players involved in the MEPP. To demonstrate from his own experiences in Northern Ireland how peace can be manufactured in the most unpromising of circumstances. Through persistence and through give and take. Through never taking "No" for a final answer. The Ulster Unionist slogan for the last few years has been an uncompromising "Ulster Says No!" In effect "No" to all peace moves not on their terms. Ulster has at last said, "Yes." From the newly found optimism of Ulster and from the mechanisms of turning despair into hope there are lessons to be learnt that can apply to anywhere in the world. That is why Messrs Netanyahu and Arafat (and I dare say Madeleine Albright as well) should listen to Mr. Blair.

The writer is a retired diplomat and served as British ambassador to Jordan until March 1997. He contributed this article to the Jordan Times.

## LETTERS

### 'Still outrageous'

To the editor:

WITH REGARD to the article "Telecommunications network can meet needs of 'all' citizens — official" (Jordan Times, May 5), I would like to ask why was so little mentioned about the cost of the local phone calls to access the Internet.

I am a daily private user of the Internet and have found it becoming very affordable as far as the Internet charges are concerned. But the local phone call charges are killing me.

Allow me to tell you a little story. We are a family of six, taking turns using the Internet from research for homework, browsing, emails, chat and family and business connections overseas. We were connected more than usual since January. When the January phone bill came, it was a little higher than usual, but tolerable at JD59 on local calls. Then came the February phone bill. It was unusual since it had no charges for local calls. The space for the meter reading was blank. But then came the March phone bill. The charges for the local calls came to a surprising 47,957 units, which amounted to JD428.598. I was shocked. I knew we had used it a lot in the last two months, but couldn't believe this was possible. So I pulled out all my phone bills and started comparing the meter readings and discovered that the number that should have been picked up from the last reading was wrong. I went to the phone company and discovered they were fully aware of the problem and they adjusted it. So now my local charges for the two months are JD186. This is still outrageous, no matter how much we use the Internet. I have heard of a lot of other people's phone bills having the same errors. Why... If JTC knew so many bills went out with these over-charges, why didn't they notify people or print a notice in the paper? Or are they hoping we would pay and not notice?

I find it surprising that all that is mentioned about local phone call charges in your article and previous articles in the past week is the last paragraph quoting Mr. Ma'an Suhaimat as saying: The major obstacle still standing in the way of making the Internet accessible to a larger number of Jordanians is the local phone call tariffs.

I also would like to praise His Majesty King Hussein's initiative to bring the Internet into the lives of the people in Jordan. However, while it is true the Internet companies have done a lot to improve services and lower costs, the phone company must follow. This is too expensive for the average citizen in Jordan. So many people could benefit from access to the Internet. And if the schools become equipped with the Internet, who is going to foot the bill for the local calls from the phone company?

L. Haddadin  
 Amman

## Misfortunate experience

To the editor:

NEVER a truer word spoken is the only way to describe Brian Brown's article in the Jordan Times, May 5. I can remember my own experience here in Riverside in 1995, only two weeks before I was to leave on Hajj. I was returning from work around midnight, and had the misfortune to have a "peace officer" stop me because he misread my licence plate. His strong arm tactics against a then 55-year-old woman was disguised in a "complaint" that said I attacked him — to cover up his misdeeds. Being a Muslim, I never even went close to him, although he kept trying to get as close as possible. The whole experience certainly changed my attitudes about police. Funny, the only relaxed, friendly police I ran into were in Saudi Arabia.

Shelia Cassidy  
 Riverside Middle East Research Project  
 Riverside, California  
 USA

Arriving in Jordan on May 16 on a mission to serve President Iyaz...  
 With a full itinerary of...  
 The project, executed in cooperation with the Department of Announcements...  
 The project, executed in cooperation with the Department of Announcements...  
 The project, executed in cooperation with the Department of Announcements...

ON THE ROAD: Talk of imminent change...  
 The project, executed in cooperation with the Department of Announcements...  
 The project, executed in cooperation with the Department of Announcements...

## Of war and peace

By Jean-Claude Elias

TWO ILLUSTRIOUS mathematicians, Blaise Pascal of France (1623-1662) and Charles Babbage of Britain (1792-1871) are considered the fathers of the computer. But the concept and the design of the machine were both imagined remained theoretical until 1942.

Between 1942 and 1946, Americans J. Edgar and J. Mauchly from the University of Pennsylvania developed and actually built the ENIAC, the very first electronic computer known to mankind. It was 1800-square-foot area, weighed 30 tonnes, and contained 17,868 vacuum tubes and 6000 manual switches. It remained in operation until 1955.

The ENIAC was built for the U.S. Army which badly needed a fast computing device to guide its ballistic missiles during World War II. With or without the stimulus of major war and the commanding "request" of the U.S. Army, a computer would have been anyway, some day. There is no doubt that the conditions prevailing in 1942-1946 played a major role in accelerating the birth of the machine.

It is no secret that scientific research continues to be a major factor in the development of modern society.

Region still re...  
 By Hind-Lara Mango  
 Special to the Jordan Times  
 AMMAN — Despite the absence of an open war in the Middle East, there has been no real improvement in humanitarian conditions, according to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).  
 "There is no real peace, there are still a number of victims to be protected and assisted as refugees, and detained persons of war who should be protected on the basis of the Geneva Convention," says the ICRC's President, Jean-Pierre Sommerburg, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).  
 Speaking to the Jordan Times on the eve of the World Day of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (Commemorated on May 8), Sommerburg said violations of the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention continue to take place in the Middle East.  
 He noted that many conflicts remain less open than they were in the past. He said that the world is not as peaceful as it once was. He said that the ICRC is not doing enough to help the victims of war. He said that the ICRC is not doing enough to help the victims of war.



## Society on the move

# Another Swiss to rediscover Petra

Arriving in Jordan on May 16 on a state visit is Swiss President Flavio Cotti and his wife Renata. With a full itinerary of official meetings, the Cottis will also visit Petra, where they will observe the culminating project of the Petra National Trust to excavate and restore the site down to its original pavement. This JD 470,000 project came about as a result of the debt cancellation of Jordan to Switzerland. Fifteen per cent of the total debt was allocated to projects related to culture and development, thus some of that money went to the Petra National Trust for this particular project. On the team are the Jordanian firm of Middle East Engineering Management, headed by Ma'an Humaidi, who worked on Nabataean hydrology and all the engineering consultancy, and Swiss architect/restorer Ueli Bellwald, who was responsible for the archaeological restoration. The project, executed in coordination with Department of Antiquities, has made record time in achieving its goal. Begun in June 1997, it is expected to be completed this June. The excavation went down into the floor of the site to a depth of 3.52 metres, and all the while the work was being conducted the site was never closed to visitor passage. The team says that the project will safeguard visitors from flash floods and makes passage more comfortable. According to Petra National Trust President HRH Prince Raad bin Zeid, the project "is an example of outstanding teamwork between all parties concerned."

Simone Pott and her daughter Laura attend the BUNIAN workshop in Amman on Tuesday



Amman. Both Drs. Sadi and Mansur, however, were not remiss about their obligations to the newspaper and have sent their articles from abroad.

Training Institute in Beirut, with the support of the European Commission. According to Simone Pott, Laura's attendance at Tuesday's workshop was just a debut.

**IN THE MOOD?** Warm summer nights and hot Spanish guitar — a recipe for passion! Well at least that's what's on Sunday night (May 10) at 8:00 p.m. In what has become a fruitful practice of joint efforts between Noor Al Hussein Foundation/National Music Conservatory, under the energetic leadership of NMC Director Kifah Fakhouri, and international cultural organisations, the NMC and the Instituto Cervantes will present renowned Spanish guitarist Rafael Serraller in concert at the Union Bank for Investment and Savings in Smeisani. Mr. Serraller will perform in Amman and then Beirut in a tribute to Federico Garcia Lorca as 1998 marks the centennial of the famous composer's birth. Featured on Mr. Serraller's programme, along with pieces by Lorca are compositions for guitar by other Spanish greats such as Andrés Segovia and Manuel de Falla. As the Instituto Cervantes gallery was already booked on Sunday evening, and hotel facilities were said to be acoustically unfit, the organisers were told that the Union Bank's new headquarters houses an appropriate multipurpose assembly hall which would serve perfectly. Contacts made, the bank offered to host the concert. Mr. Serraller will hold another concert at the Instituto Cervantes in Amman on Monday when he will play for students.

Aisha Hindiye, UNDP finance assistant, receives a plaque from UNDP Resident Rep. Jørgen Lissner upon her 30 years of service



UNDP in Amman has retired to spend more time with her family and get in some travelling. Mrs. Hindiye joined UNDP in February 1965 as a secretary. She worked here way up through the ranks to become finance assistant. Mrs. Hindiye was honoured at an office celebration with her colleagues and associates, who all concurred that she has been vital to them.

**ON THE ROAD:** Talk of imminent changes at the top of the Jordan Times management have not stopped two senior columnists from travelling abroad for different professional purposes. Dr. Waleed Sadi, an international lawyer, and once chief editor of the J.T., is in Geneva, as a representative of Jordan, to attend the annual meeting of the United Nations Human Rights Commission. Dr. Yusuf Mansur has left for the U.S. where he will meet with Michael Porter, the management guru, to write a joint paper on competitiveness in Jordan and the progress in the current project of the competitiveness team at the Ministry of Planning. The ministry team uses the Porter theory of competitiveness for their studies on different sectors. Dr. Mansur's paper will be published in the Harvard Business Review. He will also deliver a lecture on the issue of Jordan's competitiveness at Harvard University and will select two first-year MBA students from Harvard for international training in competitive studies with the Ministry of Planning team (comprised entirely of Jordanians) here in

**BY EXAMPLE:** Two women attending the BUNIAN workshop, which opened in Amman on Tuesday, are, by their mere presence, making a case for breast-feeding in Jordan. Simone Pott, a German journalist, presented a paper on "The Perception of Arab NGOs in Europe, at the Strategic Options of Cooperation between Arab NGOs and NGOs in the European Union, held at the SAS, Radisson Hotel. There in her arms was perhaps the youngest participant, five-week old Laura, born to Simone and her journalist husband Marcel Pott. Another mother, Lefetie Van Manen, a Dutch NGO specialist in capacity building, was attending as an observer with her three-month-old daughter Tondalaya (Tonda for short). Mrs. Van Manen, whose husband Jan, a UNICEF project officer in Amman, and Mrs. Pott have "by nature" become free advocates for UNICEF's drive to promote breast-feeding in the Kingdom. The workshop was jointly implemented by Friedrich Naumann Foundation and the International Management and

**GET THERE EARLY:** It's May, and once again The British Ladies of Amman are holding their annual fair. The event, which opens from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Friday (May 8) will be held (as has been the tradition) in the gardens of the British Ambassador's residence on Zuhra Street. The day's events for the whole family include a grand raffle, games, entertainment, refreshment stands, handicrafts and home-made products. There will also be a children's fancy dress competition at 12:30. All proceeds will go to local charities.

**HAPPY TRAILS:** The United Nations Development Programme wished one of its own a fond farewell recently. She is Aisha Hindiye, who after more than 30 years with

**FAITH RESTORED:** Much to his surprise and delight, Jordan Times reporter Tareq Ayoub discovered this week that not all Amman's taxi drivers are inconsiderate thugs. Daoud Suleiman, who works for the Marka Taxi Company and who drove Ayoub from the paper to Hashitini Shattali Tuesday night, showed up at the Jordan Times' offices on Wednesday afternoon after attempting to track down Ayoub by phone without success. In his hand was Ayoub's cassette recorder (an indispensable little gadget for hacks without shorthand). Mr. Suleiman said he found the recorder in his taxi after returning to his office on Tuesday night. Our hats are off to Mr. Suleiman!

Jennifer Hamarneh

## Of war and peace, and the making of computers

By Jean-Claude Elias

TWO ILLUSTRIOUS mathematicians, Blaise Pascal of France (1623-1662) and Charles Babbage of Britain (1792-1871) are considered the forefathers of the computer. But the concept and the design of the machine that they both imagined remained theoretical and embryonic until 1942.

Between 1942 and 1946, Americans J. Eckert and J. Mauchly from the University of Pennsylvania developed and actually built the ENIAC, the very first electronic computer known to mankind. It was 1800-square-foot in area, weighed 30 tonnes, and contained 17,468 vacuum tubes and 6000 manual switches. It remained in operation until 1955.

The ENIAC was built for the U.S. Army which badly needed a fast-computing device to guide its ballistic missiles during World War II. With or without the stimulus of a major war, a computer would have been born anyway, some day. There is no doubt however that the conditions prevailing in 1942-1946 played a major role in accelerating the birth of the machine.

It is no secret that scientific research com-

missioned and financed by the military, particularly by armies as powerful as the American, and in times of stress, stands better chances to come up with fast and positive results than research funded by civilian parties who rarely benefit from the same kind of financing and backing. The combined elements of emergency on one hand, and strong (sometimes unlimited) financial support on the other, play a decisive role. By imagining a little extrapolation game one would wonder what would happen to the software and the hardware we are now using if a major war, God forbid, should erupt in the Western world.

Would manufacturers design more reliable hardware, crash-proof software? Would they come up with new ideas? Would users of PCs gain anything from a conflict? Apart from the horrifying thought and the disastrous consequences of war, a military conflict probably wouldn't bring anything to the world of personal computing, even from the cold, technical point of view.

Firstly, the commercial stimulation, the competition and the thirst for business supremacy have grown so strong with companies like Microsoft, Novell, Intel and others

that they

really do

not need

armed

conflicts

or

requests

from the

military

to improve

their products.

Secondly, technological

breakthroughs are not immediately made

available to Mr./Ms. Everybody. At least not

systematically. An example: there is currently

a very sophisticated cyphering method, based

on a 140-bit algorithm (extremely difficult to

crack). Although for some it is just another

piece of software, it is nevertheless considered

a weapon. Exporting it outside the U.S.

and Canada is strictly prohibited. Those interested

in more technical details can check

Microsoft web site ([www.microsoft.com](http://www.microsoft.com)) and

browse the Windows NT section.

We, PC users, should believe and hope that

peace is a better environment for the advancement

of technology, Information Technology in particular.

### chip talk



## 'Region still requires humanitarian assistance'

By Hind-Lara Mango  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Despite the absence of an open war in the Middle East, there has been no real improvement in humanitarian terms, according to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

"There is no real peace, therefore there remain a number of victims to be protected and assisted such as refugees, and detained prisoners of war who should be protected on the basis of the Fourth Geneva Convention," says Cornelio Sommaruga, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

Speaking to the Jordan Times last week on the eve of the World Day of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (Commemorated on May 8), Mr. Sommaruga said violations of the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention continue to take place in the Middle East.

At the global level, Mr. Sommaruga noted that many conflicts

remain unresolved: "There are less open conflicts nowadays, but this situation is neither one of peace nor one of war."

He said this phenomenon is worrisome as victims all over the world continue to need humanitarian protection and assistance. "I must say that this need has not radically changed in 1998."

The ICRC has been present in the Middle East since 1967. It has not diminished in importance, says Mr. Sommaruga, even if some of its activities have changed in character.

"We are not only visiting prisoners in Israel, but also in the autonomous self-rule territories on a basis of an agreement reached with the Palestinian Authority," he says.

The ICRC president commended the efforts of His Majesty King Hussein and HRH Crown Prince Hassan for their continuous interest in the work of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, particularly their support of the ICRC. Mr. Sommaruga also congratulated the

Jordan Red Crescent on its jubilee anniversary.

Since 1979, the ICRC has had access to approximately 25,910 detainees in civil and military facilities in Kingdom. Jordan is among the few Arab countries which accepts ICRC visits to such detainees.

On a global scale, a victory for humanity this century was, according to Mr. Sommaruga, the Ottawa Treaty banning the use, stockpiling and transfer of landmines. He says he believed it to be "a victory for humanity: for the cause of humanitarian values in the face of cruelty and indifference."

In December last year more than 120 states signed this treaty which obliges them to "never under any circumstances use, develop, produce, stockpile, or transfer anti-personnel mines or help anyone else to do so."

The Red Cross and Red Crescent movements extend assistance to mine victims, who are mainly civilians, in need of physical and

social rehabilitation.

The ICRC and other international bodies have taken a staunch stance in the launching of this international campaign promoting the ban of anti-personnel mines.

Specialists in the field of landmines believe that there are still around 280,000 landmines buried in Jordan as a consequence of previous wars. Mr. Sommaruga hopes the governments of the Middle East will reach a united stance on banning landmines and eventually sign the Ottawa Convention.

He says it was imperative to recognise that the real victory for humanity lies ahead. "It will be celebrated on that day when we must no longer pour our best efforts into picking up the debris of war and mending the human wounds of a destructive technology out of control: it will be the day when humanity's wisdom, respect for basic humanitarian norms and instinct for self-protection converge to prevent such horrors from occurring."

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HOTEL  
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JORDAN



# Reforms that look good on paper must be implemented to be effective, U.S. official tells Jordanians

By Ghaila Alul  
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) plans to provide sustainable credit services to at least 25,000 small borrowers in Jordan by the year 2001, a senior U.S. official said Tuesday.

Addressing a Rotary Club luncheon, USAID Administrator Brian Atwood said the USAID is currently involved in several programmes aimed at expanding economic opportunities in Jordan and providing access to financial and business services, with special focus on micro, small and medium-sized businesses.

In March, USAID launched a \$13.4 million programme aimed at transforming Jordan's business environment, stimulating greater investments and increasing economic growth through sustainable microfinance initiatives.

Access to Microfinance and

Improved Implementation of Policy Reform (AMIR) programme, which comes to support Jordan in its efforts to become an attractive location for doing business, strives to extend sustainable microfinance services for poor and low income entrepreneurs in order to develop and promote sustainable microfinance institutions in the country, based on the best practices from around the world.

Mr. Atwood said the USAID funding to Jordan has grown from \$7.2 million in 1996 to \$126 million in 1997 — an increase of 1,800 per cent in a single year.

In 1998, the U.S. has contributed a total of \$271 million to Jordan, \$140 million of which were allocated by USAID to increase economic opportunities for Jordanians and to support water and family planning programmes.

"The rapid expansion in USAID assistance to Jordan is, in part, a reflection of U.S. appreciation for this country's constructive contribution to

a sometimes difficult peace process," noted Mr. Atwood who on Tuesday concluded a one-day visit to Jordan during which he laid the cornerstone of a \$26.7 million Wadi Mousa treatment plant, funded by the USAID.

When completed, the overall water system project, estimated at \$43 million, will provide the 17,000 residents of Wadi Mousa, Taiba, Um Sayhoun and Beida with 1.25 million cubic meters per year of treated wastewater for agricultural use.

The U.S. official acknowledged Jordan's efforts targeted towards jump-starting its economy through introducing new economic and investment legislation.

"Indeed, Jordan's economic performance in recent years has been remarkable, with economic growth rates exceeding that of most of its neighbours, including Egypt," said Mr. Atwood.

However, he indicated that Jordan continues to face two key challenges: First, he said, economic reforms have

not yet truly benefited the poor and unemployed; and, second, it is still too difficult to do business in Jordan.

"A USAID-funded study recently highlighted the fact that it takes no less than 16 separate approvals to establish a manufacturing enterprise in Jordan. For obvious reasons, this situation needs to change," Mr. Atwood said.

The investment Promotion Corporation (IPC) in collaboration with the World Bank and the USAID recently concluded a road map study that identified major administrative barriers hindering simplified procedures to start up a business in the areas of manufacturing, transport and tourism.

Through the study, which focused on the Greater Amman, Aqaba and Jordan Valley region, Jordan wants to simplify procedures for foreign investors in order to make their lives easier when establishing a business in the Kingdom.

Still, Jordan's commercial policies have recently been ranked by the

Stanford Research Institute (SRI) as the highest in the Middle East compared to regional benchmarks — Israel, Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia, Bahrain and Cyprus.

"That study reported that Jordan is ahead of most of its neighbours in terms of economic policy reforms and is even poised to become the ideal entry point for attracting investment to the region," Mr. Atwood said.

However, he added, "policy pronouncements on their own are never enough. Reforms that look good on paper must be implemented to be effective."

Mr. Atwood stressed the need for Jordan to accelerate the implementation of internationally acceptable Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) legislation if it is to succeed in its bid to be among the first Arab countries to join the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

Jordan last month succeeded in averting plans by the U.S. to place the Kingdom on a "Priority Watch" list of

countries violating adequate intellectual property protection.

The decision followed what officials described as "productive talks" talks in Washington last month where the two countries reviewed plans by Jordan to start implementing adequate IPR laws, before it joins the Geneva-based WTO.

The U.S. Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky has recently announced that Jordan, placed last year on a special "301 Watch" list of countries violating IPR laws, will be one of four countries subject to what was termed as an "out-of-cycle" review whereby progress on IPR legislation will be evaluated during the course of the year.

"We would love to see an American pharmaceutical company come here and establish a joint venture with a Jordanian company as long as they are assured that the amount of brain power that went into developing a new drug is protected," Mr. Atwood told reporters.

## Seminar underlines importance of privatisation in improving efficiency, performance of businesses

AMMAN (Petra) — Participants in a three-day seminar on privatisation and restructuring the industrial sector in Arab countries Wednesday underlined the importance of privatisation in improving the performance and efficiency of economic units and called for providing them with the institutional and legislative infrastructure, as well as the necessary climate and incentives, to ensure the

aspired success. At the conclusion of their meetings, participants reaffirmed that privatisation is not an end in itself but a means for privatising and increasing efficiency and competitiveness. They emphasised that success can only be achieved through the broad participation of all parties concerned.

Development of human resources and providing and sharing of accurate and complete information among the parties concerned are also vital for the success of the privatisation

drive, the participants agreed.

Participants encouraged the establishment and development of markets and called for overcoming all obstacles facing the smooth flow of Arab capitals. They also urged opening financial and banking markets among Arab countries to increase the volume of money circulation and cash liquidity and to develop the "Greater Arab Free Trade Zone."

Stressing the need for providing a stable investment climate capable of mobilis-

ing local resources and attracting Arab and foreign capitals, participants said such climate will contribute to the establishment of the "Greater Arab Free Trade Zone."

They called for utilising revenues from the privatisation programmes to develop the infrastructure and establish labour-generating projects. The seminar was organised by the Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organisation (AIDMO) in cooperation with the Amman Chamber of Industry (ACI).

## Kuwait seeking non-oil sources of income

KUWAIT CITY (APP) — Kuwait, smarting from lower prices for its oil, has set up a special committee to search for new sources of income, a senior Kuwaiti official has said.

The government wants "to diversify revenue (sources), reduce public expenditures and improve the management of public funds in response to the fall in oil prices," said the third deputy prime minister and minister of state for cabinet affairs, Nasser Al Rodhan.

The committee's creation was approved at the weekly cabinet meeting, he told the

official KUNA news agency. Kuwait's oil minister, Sheikh Saud Nasser Al Sabah, has warned that weak oil prices were driving the country toward an "economic catastrophe."

"We are currently selling at a price of \$10.5 a barrel. Kuwait will be faced with economic catastrophe if this situation continues," he said, quoted by KUNA.

Sheikh Saud added that the deficit in the 1998-1999 budget could run as high as two billion dinars (\$6.6 billion) because of the collapse in crude prices.

In mid-April, the govern-

ment approved the budget which starts July 1 and is based on an oil price of \$12 a barrel. It forecasts a deficit of 1.7 billion dinars (\$5.6 billion), already a 41 per cent rise over 1997-1998.

Sheikh Saud charged that the last OPEC meeting held at the end of March in Vienna had "given legitimacy to the quota violations" by several producers, headed by Venezuela.

The Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries decided on cuts based on actual production rather than on quotas allocated by the 11-nation group.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET											
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - JORDAN											
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179											
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR WEDNESDAY 06/05/1998											
PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH	PAST 12 MONTHS LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	OTV.	NO. OF TRANS.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE	
8 355.500	170.000	ARAB BANK	14.5	1.13	31	420	74065	175.50	177.00	1.50+	
1 1.300	.800	MID EAST DEV. BK.	27.8	0.00	2	6400	5636	.89	.88	.01-	
2 2.680	1.600	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	8.2	8.81	1	50	80	1.60	1.60	0.00	
6 6.260	4.660	THE HOUSING BK.	18.5	3.43	93	51900	30540	6.08	5.83	.25-	
4 4.020	1.740	JOR. ISLAND BANK	18.9	0.00	19	16643	30555	1.78	1.83	.05+	
3 3.900	.810	JOR. DEV. INV. BANK	9.8	0.00	3	500	765	1.53	1.53	0.00	
1 1.400	.800	BEIT AL-KHAL (BEITNA)	4.0	0.00	1	700	581	.82	.83	.01+	
BANK SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 246.66	CHNG: +0.27	152	76666	417175				
2 2.950	2.700	JORDAN INSURANCE	11.6	8.56	1	1000	2700	2.70	2.70	0.00	
2 2.400	1.590	JOR. FRENCH INSUR.	6.0	11.74	2	1300	2781	2.12	2.13	.01+	
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 121.58	CHNG: +0.05	3	2300	5481				
2 2.240	1.580	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	9.9	5.42	6	459	934	2.00	2.03	.03+	
1 1.550	.970	NATL. PORTFOLIO	42.7	0.00	9	3600	3835	1.05	1.07	.02+	
1 1.120	.850	REAL ESTATE INV.	17.4	0.00	2	500	550	.85	.89	.04+	
1 590	.350	JORDAN TEL. TRD.	14.6	0.00	3	4250	1493	.35	.34	.01-	
1 1.480	1.100	MID. EAST HOTELS	9	0.00	5	2000	2160	1.10	1.06	.04-	
1 1.090	.900	ZARQA EDUCATION	16.2	0.00	5	3700	3404	.92	.92	0.00	
1 1.830	1.450	UNIFIED CO.	6.7	7.28	13	5650	8490	1.50	1.51	.01+	
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 114.60	CHNG: +0.33	43	20159	20753				
4 4.450	2.450	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	14.8	4.40	43	43060	106089	2.46	2.50	.04+	
11 11.250	9.270	JOR. PETROL. RETAILERY	9.9	8.71	8	1712	17462	10.19	10.20	.01+	
1 1.470	1.040	MOOEN INDUSTRIES	11.4	6.94	7	1565	2250	1.47	1.44	.03-	
2 2.070	1.100	INDUSTRIAL COMM. GR.	9	0.00	6	1250	1560	1.18	1.20	.02+	
5 5.740	3.470	ARAB PHARM. IND.	14.6	3.77	26	35100	187269	5.28	5.31	.03+	
1 1.700	1.850	JOR. CERAMIC IND.	7.7	5.68	2	450	792	1.85	1.76	.09-	
4 4.750	4.070	JOR. PRINT & PACK.	9	0.00	1	200	774	4.07	3.87	.20-	
1 1.450	1.020	JOR. PIPES MANCT.	9.9	8.40	8	10100	11215	1.10	1.15	.05+	
6 6.350	4.470	DAR ALHANA OV. IND.	6.6	6.36	3	400	2700	5.69	5.50	.19-	
3 3.220	2.220	ARAB ALUM. IND.	20.8	8.96	27	18195	50423	2.77	2.79	.02+	
1 570	.400	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	16.2	0.00	2	8000	3840	.48	.49	.01+	
1 620	.510	NATIONAL INDUS.	9	0.00	2	450	735	.54	.55	.01+	
2 2.130	1.300	UNIV. CHEM. INDUS.	13.7	6.15	2	350	455	1.30	1.30	0.00	
3 3.000	.920	NATL. CABLE WIRE MFG.	28.2	0.00	30	11350	13243	1.14	1.17	.03+	
1 1.730	.530	JOR. SUBPR. CHEM	11.6	0.00	8	2600	1561	.60	.61	.01+	
1 1.560	1.150	ARAB PAPER, CHEM.	14.3	4.62	17	14149	18189	1.27	1.30	.03+	
1 1.540	.810	UNIV. MOON INDUS.	13.7	6.98	5	1060	911	.85	.86	.01+	
1 1.200	.680	JOR. INDUS. RESOURCES	9.3	14.49	3	650	947	.69	.69	0.00	
1 1.310	1.080	INTL. TOBACCO	7.5	5.43	20	9205	11922	1.16	1.28	.12+	
1 690	.560	JORDAN STEEL	8.3	9.46	6	2250	1665	.73	.74	.01+	
1 570	.570	MID. EAST COMPLEX	10.7	0.00	30	36000	20879	.58	.59	.01+	
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 103.92	CHNG: +0.24	266	211196	459923				
GRAND TOTAL			INDEX: 169.03	CHNG: +0.26	464	310321	903333				
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR WEDNESDAY 06/05/1998											
1 1.050	.910	EXPORT & FIB. IND. 751	16.8	0.00	3	1800	1388	.91	.91	0.00	
1 400	.300	CENTRAL GEN. STORAGE	9	0.00	2	250	78	.31	.31	0.00	
1 400	.340	JOR. TRADE PAC.	9	0.00	3	2500	1025	.41	.41	0.00	
1 800	.660	UNION INV. SOI	9	0.00	6	1872	468	.75	.75	0.00	
1 620	.360	ARAB FIB. INVEST.	9	0.00	11	12900	5162	.40	.41	.01+	
1 1.010	.720	AL-SHARQ INV. CO.	9	0.00	5	33340	33339	1.00	1.00	0.00	
1 2.220	1.050	CENTURY INV. GROUP	9	0.00	2	2500	3825	1.58	1.53	.05-	
1 600	.370	ARAB FOOD & MED.	9	0.00	10	9205	4929	.49	.49	0.00	
1 470	.240	ARAB INTL. INV. TRD.	39.2	0.00	33	58700	19929	.33	.34	.01+	
1 510	.280	NATL. TEXTILE	9	0.00	2	1000	310	.32	.31	.01-	
1 650	.360	NATL. MULT. ENG. MFG.	9	0.00	27	101500	44860	.42	.44	.02+	
1 1.660	.860	UNION TOBACCO ST. ST	9.7	0.00	3	4200	5880	1.53	1.52	.01-	
1 450	.240	INDUS. INV.	9	0.00	4	6100	1708	.28	.28	0.00	
1 950	.530	ADVANCED PHARM.	12.8	0.00	5	1600	759	.49	.49	0.00	
1 950	.530	ADVANCED PHARM.	12.8	0.00	5	1600	3167	.64	.64	0.00	
1 370	.370	PEARL SAN. P. CONSV.	9	0.00	2	8080	3232	.40	.40	0.00	
1 710	.430	NATL. POULTRY	9	0.00	6	7950	4134	.53	.52	.01-	

## THE Daily Crossword Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

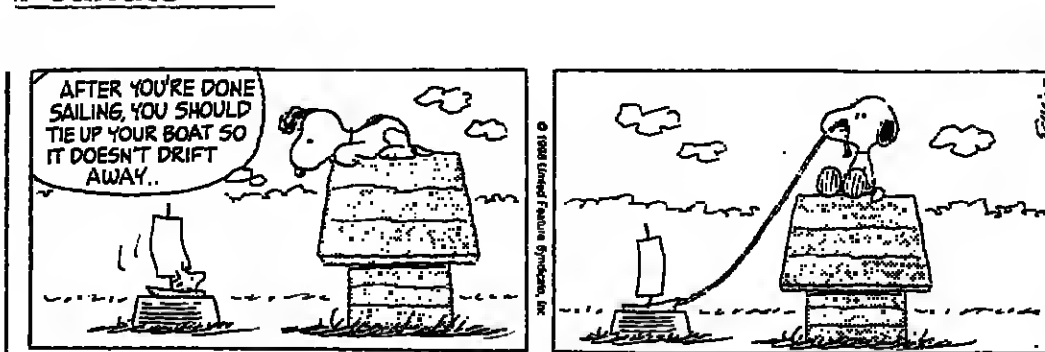
ACROSS

- 1 Hitch
- 2 Eve's male
- 3 Great success
- 4 Golf target
- 5 Gray wolf
- 6 Spooky
- 7 Lise reasoning rather than emotions
- 8 Tightwad
- 9 Cuffie
- 10 2nd smallest state
- 11 Unfamiliar
- 12 Tex-Mex order
- 13 First name in mysteries
- 14 Filbert trees
- 15 Timetable, briefly
- 16 Track shape
- 17 Specialists platforms
- 18 Curiosity
- 19 Seins port
- 20 Japanese wrestling
- 21 Memorable times
- 22 Wading birds
- 23 Sulk
- 24 Mailed
- 25 Skinfirt
- 26 Notes of scales
- 27 Mob meles
- 28 Deceived
- 29 Ignorance
- 30 Video-game company
- 31 Golda of Israel
- 32 Icelandic saga
- 33 Watch trail
- 34 "kappa on tickle"
- 35 Brings to a close
- 36 Notices

DOWN

- 1 Leveling wedges
- 2 Song for nine voices
- 3 Sacred table
- 4 Actress Davis
- 5 Passages with lively tempos
- 6 Unknown John
- 7 Basics
- 8 Sacred song sung a capella
- 9 Beach view
- 10 Brooks of "High Anxiety"
- 11 Very dry
- 12 Dimensions
- 13 Dishonorable man
- 14 Subway route
- 15 Zion National Park state
- 16 The King
- 17 Ultraviolet filter
- 18 Goble
- 19 Gorman river
- 20 Bart Simpson's sister
- 21 Give lip
- 22 Gentleman
- 23 Nautical speed
- 24 Vocal starter?
- 25 Head-to-head battles
- 26 Ritzy rides
- 27 Mingle
- 28 Credit certificates
- 29 Clipped-off piece
- 30 Disney sci-fi movie
- 31 The Velvet Fog
- 32 Desert springs
- 33 Oxygen compound
- 34 Rock full of crystals
- 35 Best at al.
- 36 Decree
- 37 Opposed to:
- 38 Confidence game
- 39 Adolescent
- 40 Baude or pyrite
- 41 Covered up

## Peanuts



## Andy Capp



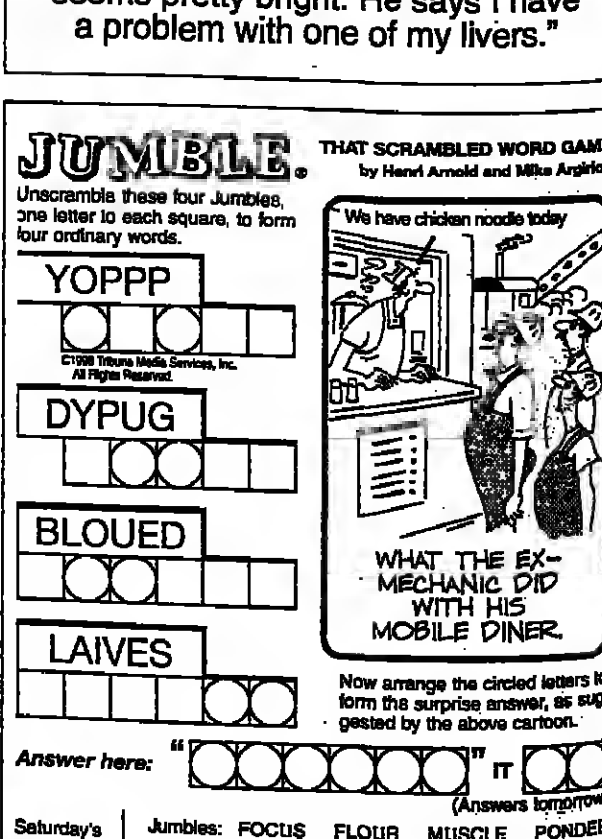
## Mutt'n'Jeff



## THE BETTER HALF By Glasbergen



## JUMBLE





## HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR THURSDAY, MAY 7, 1998

**ARIES:** (March 21-April 19) — Someone you find both infuriating and alluring wants you to do something, and that is a mixed blessing. You don't want to do it, but you might as well admit you like the attention. Truth is, the two of you bring out the best in each other. Nurture the relationship.

**TAURUS:** (April 20-May 20) — There is plenty of work to do, and most of it is paperwork. You are in the mood to take action, and this is the best way to start. The decision has been made. Now you just have to power through. Be prepared to cover unexpected expenses this afternoon.

**GEMINI:** (May 21-June 21) — Tomorrow would be perfect for a party at your house, with one special person invited. Before you get to that happy activity, however, there is another job to do. It is something you promised to have in the mail by tomorrow. If you can get it started today, your chances of success improve greatly.

**CANCER:** (June 22-July 22) — It looks like there is enough chaos to last most people a month. You are good at handling situations like this, however, and you actually kind of like the excitement. You could go ahead and play the role of the peacemaker or mediator. You are good at that, too.

**LEO:** (July 23-August 23) — Gathering information that proves what a good job you are doing could lead to other interesting facts as well. You might make yourself downright invaluable. Once you get interested in learning, you will be an awesome force with which to contend.

**VIRGO:** (August 23-September 23) — You are in the mood for shopping. Study your bills coming due so you will know how much you can spend. You might see something you want so much that you are willing to throw caution to the winds. Don't throw your paycheck at it, however, especially if you haven't received it yet.

**LIBRA:** (September 23-October 23) — You do not have enough money to buy something you want, but that may not stop

you. If you are doing it to impress a loved one, reconsider. That person will think better of you if you save the money instead. If you are investing in educational materials, however, go ahead.

**SCORPIO:** (October 24-November 21) — Check in on the grapevine today. You could find just what you are looking for. You can also provide something in trade by doing a little job for the person who has what you want. You love to work deals like this, and you are very good at it. So get busy on one today.

**SAGITTARIUS:** (November 22-December 21) — The toughest of the exams is over. Whether you passed or not, you have got reason to celebrate. If you followed the instructions, you might have reached a higher level of enlightenment. That would give you even more reason to celebrate, and this is a marvelous day for a party.

**CAPRICORN:** (December 22-January 19) — There will be a rest today at work. You have to pay attention to what the boss wants. Someone at home is having a temper tantrum, too. Everyone wants you to fuss over them. You can straighten them out on what needs to be handled first. You are pretty good at that.

**AQUARIUS:** (January 20-February 18) — You need a change of scene, but your sweetheart has other plans. You want to go some place interesting tonight, but he or she wants to stay at home. You might compromise by joining friends for dinner and then going your separate ways. Who says a good relationship has to follow a certain routine? Make it up as you go along.

**PISCES:** (February 19-March 20) — Your loved one wants something and you would like to buy it. That is how you always react when someone you love wants something. Don't worry if you can't actually accomplish it this time. Everybody knows that is what you would like to do, and they love you for it. In this case, it really is the thought that counts.

## Government plans to levy tax on Fastlink and Internet bills

By Issam Qadmani  
Special to the Jordan Times

**AMMAN** — The government intends to levy a 10 per cent tax on the services offered by telecommunication companies working in the Kingdom.

Corporation (JTC) before it was converted into a private company.

The source added that the tax includes all working telecommunication firms such as Fastlink and Internet companies.

A respected source declined to mention when the government will implement this new measure noting that the 10 per cent tax was levied on the bills issued by the Jordan Telecommunications

## HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR FRIDAY, MAY 8, 1998

**ARIES:** (March 21 to April 19) — This could be a day of surprises. Not to worry. Some of it's going to be fun, if you can keep your temper. There's no reason to get upset, actually. You're way ahead of the opposition. You're smarter, more experienced and better looking. You'll win any competition easily.

**TAURUS:** (April 20 to May 20) — Get those checks and letters in the mail. Might as well send off for that new outfit you've been wanting, too. You should throw something that's a little bit of a reward into the mix. Otherwise, the whole day could be complete drudgery.

**GEMINI:** (May 21 to June 21) — You could have a magnificent insight early this morning. In fact, it looks like it might happen in a dream. At any rate, this could spur you to furious activity. There's a sense of urgency, but that's OK. It helps you think faster. Push yourself to greater heights.

**CANCER:** (June 22 to July 21) — Conditions are unsettled. You might be moving from one location to another. You have plenty of friends who'd like to help, so let them. Meanwhile, protect yourself emotionally. Tempers will be short. Don't add to the confusion by getting into a snit.

**LEO:** (July 22 to August 21) — Brainstorm a new idea with your partner this morning. Together, you can come up with something neither of you would have thought of on your own. This happens regularly between you, and that's one reason you put up with each other.

**VIRGO:** (August 22 to September 22) — If you can solve a problem at work, you could get a bonus or, if you're self-employed, make more money. Somehow technology and money are linked in a favourable way. It won't be easy, however. You may have to hire an expert. It's money well spent.

**LIBRA:** (September 23 to October 22) — You're good at many things, but keeping track of your spending can be a real hassle sometimes. You'd rather buy whatever you want and let the chips fall where they may. That's not a good idea, especially right now. Pay off old bills first.

**SCORPIO:** (October 23 to November 21) — You're good at wheeling and dealing. The hard part is the payback. You need to do something for another person to get him or her to do what you want. Well, the sooner you get it over with, the sooner you'll be on to something else.

**SAGITTARIUS:** (November 22 to December 21) — Someone you care about is in a bind. You may be able to help. Something you've studying recently applies in just this situation. You may surprise the other person — and even yourself — with how much you know. You're smarter than you think you are.

**CAPRICORN:** (December 22 to January 20) — Travel may put a dent in your financial reserves. This looks like travel associated with work, in which case you could deduct it or be reimbursed for it. Have you thought about studying a foreign language? This would be a good day to start. It'll improve your relationship with a foreign friend.

**AQUARIUS:** (January 21 to February 19) — Keep paper and pencil next to your bed. You could come up with an absolutely brilliant idea during the night. It's the solution to a problem you've been struggling with for some time. If you didn't write it down already, take a moment now to see if you can remember what it was.

**PISCES:** (February 20 to March 20) — If you're short on cash, don't worry. You can learn how to make more, or stretch your resources. Necessity is the mother of invention, remember? All you have to do is learn, and you do know how to do that. Contact someone who knows what you need to find out, and make a date.

Birthstone of May: Emerald — Citrine

## Hrawi says Arab oil wealth in the hands of Jewish bankers

**BEIRUT (AP)** — President Elias Hrawi said that American and European banks are dominated by Jews in a speech Wednesday on Lebanon's hopes to regain its role as a Middle East financial hub.

Speaking to Arab finance ministers, Mr. Hrawi said that the bulk of the oil revenues of Arab states is deposited in European and U.S. banks.

"When an Arab state wants a loan, it borrows its own money through the managers of these banks, who are Jews," he said.

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**RAFAEL SERRALLET**

Sunday, 10 May 1998 - 8:00 p.m.  
Union Bank for Investment and Savings

The program features pieces by famous Spanish composers such as De Falla, Lorca, Salazar, Baurista and others.

**Ticket price: JD 5**

**Goethe Institut and Deutscher Musikrat/German Music Council** presents

**The Students Orchestra of the National Music Conservatory**  
Helmur Burkard, conductor

Monday, 11 May 1998 - 8:00 p.m.  
The Royal Cultural Centre - Mohr Theatre

The program features pieces by Bach, Vivaldi, Haydn, Mozart and Kabalevsky and music of two popular Arab songs.

**Ticket price: JD 5**

Tickets available at:  
• Al-Hayat Superstore, tel. 5688481 • Al-Hayat Superstore, tel. 5527995 • Bab-El, tel. 561322  
• City Plaza, tel. 5926285 • Instituto Cervantes, tel. 461058 • Radisson SAS Hotel, tel. 5607100  
• Royal Cultural Centre, tel. 5669026 • The National Music Conservatory, tel. 5687620

## REUTERS REUTERS

### The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NG	FRF
US Dollar	1.0000	1.7869	0.6828	1.4740	132.83	1.4383	1741.50	1.9882	5.9188
DE Mark	0.5683	1.0000	0.3410	0.8346	75.20	0.8140	986.02	1.1265	3.3625
GB Sterling	1.4590	2.9314	1.0000	2.4463	220.48	2.2881	2890.89	3.3021	9.8284
CH Franc	0.6784	119.73	0.4084	1.0000	90.12	0.9762	1180.92	134.89	4.0140
JP Yen	0.0075	1.3290	0.4633	1.1093	1.0000	1.0822	13.11	148.71	4.4548
CA Dollar	0.6963	1.2916	0.4225	1.0588	1.08	1.0000	1270.80	1.4351	4.3255
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0136	0.3458	0.8846	1312.85	0.8254	11.42	1.3376	3.3878
NL Guilder	0.0027	88.74	0.3027	74.08	66.72	0.7226	875.17	1.0000	2.9748
FR Franc	0.1668	0.2982	0.1017	24.8881	22.41	0.2628	33.99	33.9900	1.0000

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LBP	EGP
US Dollar	1.0000	0.7090	3.7504	0.3770	3.6405	0.3081	3.6727	1514.00	3.4185
Jordan Dinar	1.4104	1.0000	5.2897	0.5317	5.1347	0.4304	5.1801	2135.40	4.8216
Saudi Riyal	0.2688	0.1890	1.0000	0.1005	0.97	0.0814	0.98	403.69	0.9115
Bahrain Dinar	2.85	1.8808	9.9488	1.0000	9.66	0.8094	8.74	4016.23	8.0684
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1948	1.0302	1.0302	1.0000	0.0838	1.01	415.88	0.9390
Kuwait Dinar	3.2774	2.3237	12.2916	1.2305	11.93	1.0000	12.04	4961.88	0.9390
Emirate Dinar	0.2723	0.1930	1.0212	1.0208	0.9912	0.0831	1.01	412.23	0.9308
Lebanese L1000	0.06	0.4583	2.4771	0.2490	2.4046	0.2015	2.4258	1.0000	2.2579
Egyptian	0.2928	0.2074	1.0971	0.1103	1.0648	0.0883	1.0744	442.88	1.0000

Energy			Mid-East Currencies					
Commodity	Last	Previous	Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY
Brent	13.97	14.11	SA Riyal	0.2666	0.6710	0.16072	0.39316	36.4308
W. Texas	15.43	15.44	AE Dirham	0.2723	0.48088	0.16412	0.40148	36.1808
Bonny	13.97	14.11	KW Dinar	3.2774	5.79039	1.9755	4.83328	435.54
Dubai	12.82	13.09	BH Dinar	0.3770	4.86604	1.59838	3.91083	352.483
U.S. Gas	167.00	168.00	CY Pound	1.918	3.2837	1.1542	2.8242	254.502

JOD Cross Rates									
Currency	Buy	Sell	Currency	Buy	Sell	Currency	Buy	Sell	Currency
US Dollar	0.708	0.710	GBP	7.4167	7.4427	7.4427	7.6115	7.6115	GBP
GB Sterling	1.1738	1.1797	JPY	0.8146	0.8575	0.7188	0.7398	0.7398	JPY
DE Mark	0.3981	0.4011	DEM	3.8311	3.7887	3.8587	4.0750	4.0750	DEM
CH Franc	0.4772	0.4796	FRF	3.5513	1.8875	1.9047	2.0000	2.0000	FRF
FR Franc	0.119	0.1196	CHF	1.5781	3.6280	3.7520	3.9883	3.9883	CHF
JP Yen	0.8388	0.8393	ITL	5.4280	5.0500	4.8150			ITL
NL Guilder	0.3541	0.3550							
IT Lira	0.4045	0.4055							

Main Equity Indices									
Index	Index	Value	Change	% Change	High	Low	Pre Cls	Index	Index
New York	DOW JONES	9098.5	-61.07	-0.68	9180.2	9093.01	6147.87	New York	S&P 500
New York	S&P 500	1167.95	-7.55	-0.65	1178.39	1167.95	1115.6	New York	FT-SE 100
	FT-SE 100	5982.4	6.9	0.1	6000	5947.4	5998.6	Tokyo	NIKKEI 225
	NIKKEI 225	15243.84	-387.28	-2.29	15637	15128.1	15801.1	Paris	CAC 40
	CAC 40	3947.45	2.84	0.08	3975.72	3929.45	3944.91	Frankfurt	DAX
	DAX	8223.8	-2.23	-0.04	8239.92	8197.15	8220.03		

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# Majoli squeezes through while Pierce, Seles breeze

ROME (AP) — Iva Majoli, looking for her clay-court game weeks before defending her lone Grand Slam title, battled back Wednesday to beat unheralded Jana Kandarr in the second round of the Italian Open.

Majoli dropped the first set and went down 4-2 in the decisive third before reeling off four games in a row to triumph 4-6, 6-1, 6-4 in just under two hours.

"It was more difficult than I expected it to be. I was making a lot of mistakes," Majoli said. "Maybe I don't have too much confidence in myself since I haven't done too well on clay this year."

While the French Open titlist was squeezing past the 114th-ranked Kandarr, past Italian champions Mary Pierce and Monica Seles breezed to comfortable victories.

Also moving into the third round was Serena Williams, who advanced when opponent Joanne Kruger retired with a leg injury. Williams, a 16-year-old who upset No. 11 Nathalie Tauziat in the first round, led 5-1 when Kruger quit.

Williams could face older sister Venus, seeded ninth, in the quarterfinals. "When I saw the draw I was disappointed because I was looking forward to a final or semifinal meeting," said Serena, who has jumped more than 400 ranking spots to 31st in the past seven months.

All top eight seeds were playing their first matches at the \$926,000 event Wednesday, including No. 1 Monica Hingis against China's Fang Li.

No. 4 seed Pierce, the defending U.S. Open champion, beat French-Federer Cup teammate Sarah Pitkowski 6-1, 6-2, while 1990 winner Seles defeated Italy's Silvia Farina 6-2, 6-1.

"Everyone wants to see Monica back," Majoli said of Seles, who has never rediscovered her No. 1 form since being stabbed by a spectator during a 1993 match.

Seles, seeded sixth here,



Mary Pierce

will play No. 12 Sandrine Testud in the third round. Testud rallied past Austria's Barbara Schett 4-6, 6-2, 6-3 to advance Wednesday.

Pierce has shown signs of building a strong season. She has won two of the four events she has entered, including on clay at Amelia Island last month, where she defeated Majoli in the quarterfinals.

Rain washed out all play Monday and interrupted Tuesday's schedule for four hours. The sun was out Wednesday and Majoli labored through her match,

twice asking for the trainer during changeovers.

The Croatian did not play particularly well, nor did Kandarr, who played three sets for the second straight day and whose left thigh was bandaged because of a lingering muscle injury. Neither served with any consistency — there were seven service breaks in the final set.

Majoli, 20, occasionally unleashed her fierce groundstrokes but seemed almost content to wait for the German to err. Majoli lost in her opening match

on European clay last week at Hamburg, Germany, and progress in Rome would probably be a requirement if she is to put up any fight at the French Open, where she defeated Hingis in the final — the only Grand Slam the Swiss teen-ager failed to capture last year.

"It's always hard to repeat anywhere. Especially at a Grand Slam, where you have to win seven matches," Majoli said. "But I do have two weeks to get ready for the French."

## WORLD CUP '98

### Baggio to play or quit Italy

MILAN (AFP) — Roberto Baggio says he wants to play alongside Alessandro Del Piero at the World Cup this summer, but that failure to make the team could see him quit Italy and move abroad.

Baggio's double or quits approach comes as the Bologna striker prepares for a crucial game this weekend against his old club Juventus.

He has scored in each of his last three games (five goals) and another one on Sunday, in a match which will almost certainly be watched by national coach Cesare Maldini in person, could book his ticket to France.

"Today, I've got a tiny bit more hope than I had a month ago, but nothing is certain," said the 31-year-old.

"I'd go to France in any role and in any system of play. What counts is being part of the national side for the last time, because four years are a long time. It's not my problem, it's Maldini's. But I'll keep on dreaming."

Baggio, who has previously been wooed by clubs from the English Premiership to the Japanese J-League, then revealed the sub-plot to his World Cup call-up.

"This World Cup is extremely important to me, it could be the turning point in my career," he said. "My future depends on taking part, or not, in the World Cup finals."

"If the answer is positive, then I think I'll be staying in Italy, and therefore with Bologna, where I've fitted in nicely and where people appreciate me."

"But if things went differently, I could have to find a different solution — one that I don't even know at the moment."

Baggio paid tribute to his successor as Juventus' creative genius, Del Piero, and even claimed the two could be in the same team in France.

"Today, in that creative role, he's better than me, he's the king — he's got the advantage of still being very young, of playing in the most complete team in the world and to have already won a lot at national and international level."

The two men played together at the end of Baggio's spell with Juventus — "and we did well," Baggio said. "It proved that two players with similar technical characteristics can co-exist."

Another objective which the striker wants to reach by May 17, when the Serie A season ends, is his goal tally.

"I'm up to 19 so far, which is pretty close to my personal record of 21 which I set with Juventus (1992-93). I need two more to equal it, and three to beat it. But it's not going to be easy against Juventus and Lazio."

### Numan to join Rangers

GLASGOW (AFP) — Rangers began what is expected to be a huge summer rebuilding programme by signing Dutch international defender Arthur Numan from PSV Eindhoven for a reported £5 million on Tuesday.

The stylish left-back will follow his current coach Dick Advocaat to Ibrox in July after the Glasgow giants stepped in to fend off interest from Spanish side Atletico Madrid.

Rangers chairman David Murray was in Holland on Monday to finalise terms for a player who will be an important member of the Dutch squad at the World Cup finals.

Advocaat, who is due to take over from the departing Walter Smith on July 1, said Numan's arrival would be the first of several at Ibrox this summer.

"This is my first buy for Rangers and there will be a minimum of three others — maybe from Holland or maybe from other countries," he said.

"I'm very happy Arthur has agreed to join me in Glasgow because I know his qualities as a player and they are many."

Numan is the second big-name player to depart PSV for Britain.

Central defender Jaap Stam earlier this week finalised his move to Manchester United.



### Stoichkov gears up for final hurrah

PARIS (AFP) — Hristo Stoichkov won't have played much top-class football in the lead-up to the World Cup finals, but his experience is still likely to be a factor for the Bulgarian team in France.

The great striker won the hearts of the Barcelona fans when he joined the club in 1990, going on to score 117 times for the Catalan club.

As well as playing on the side that won the European Champions' League in 1992, Stoichkov won four league championship medals and the European Cup Winners' Cup in 1997, as well as the Spanish Cup.

Stoichkov was European Footballer of the Year and Bulgarian Sportsman of the Year in 1994, the year Bulgaria achieved a fourth-place finish in the World Cup in the United States.

At 32, though, time is running out for the proven goalscorer. He played poorly for Parma and Barcelona in 1996 and 1997 and barely started a game for Barca this season after undergoing two knee operations before being offloaded to CSKA Sofia.

No sooner had his appointment as club captain ruffled the feathers of national teammate Trifon Ivanov than Stoichkov was on the move again — to Saudi Arabian club Al Nasr.

Stoichkov, joint top marksman at USA 94 and scorer in all three of his team's games at Euro 96,

said he had joined Al Nasr to prepare for the World Cup, but he could have done that — playing at a higher level — with CSKA.

Stoichkov did, however, score the only goal as Al Nasr beat Samsung of South Korea to win the Asian Cup Winners' Cup in April.

Coach Hristo Bonev, who has clashed with Stoichkov in the past — notably when the captain led a player boycott at the start of the World Cup qualifying campaign — would clearly have preferred his star striker to have been playing at home.

The Bulgarians, though, managed to qualify for France 98 with only four appearances and one goal from Stoichkov — in a 4-0 caper against Luxembourg.

It may be that Stoichkov's contribution to France 98 is made from the bench, or in spurts.

It is certainly hard to see him turning back the clock to his glory years, but he remains confident.

"Bulgaria are much stronger than Nigeria and Paraguay," he said. "We'll qualify along with Spain."

## Don King's lawyers attack Chavez

NEW YORK (AFP) — Defence lawyers for Don King attacked the credibility of Mexican boxer Julio Cesar Chavez here Tuesday in the insurance fraud trial of fight promoter Don King.

Chavez had testified that he never signed an allegedly faked contract submitted to Lloyd's of London, refuting earlier testimony by King that he borrowed money to purchase a service station. Chavez also denied knowledge of the contract King submitted to the British insurer until shown a copy by prosecutors.

King is being re-tried on charges he falsified the first page of Chavez's contract in order to collect \$350,000 in non-refundable training expenses from a canceled 1991 bout with Harold Brazier. Chavez, 35, said he has made \$50 million in his 104 professional fights, 90 per cent of which were promoted by King.

Peter Flemming, King's attorney, tried several times to attack Chavez for his current relationship with Bob Arum, a promoting rival of King. When King was tried on the charges for the first time two years ago, Chavez still boxed for King. Chavez, 100-2 with two drawn and 83 knockouts, next fights on June 25 against American Ken Sigurani, 22-1 with eight knockouts, in a 10-round welterweight bout.

Should Chavez win he would be set for a World Boxing Council title bout in Las Vegas on September 18 against Oscar de la Hoya, provided the American champion beats France's Patrice Carpentier on June 13 in El Paso, Texas.

## SPORTS IN BRIEF

### Upton gets 3 month Olympic ban

SYDNEY (AFP) — Australian swimmer Richard Upton received a three month Olympic ban and was ordered to repay funding of A\$1,200 Wednesday for testing positive to the steroid masking agent Probenecid. The Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) imposed the ban when ruling Upton breached the Australian Olympic Committee's (AOC) anti-doping policy. The ban on Olympic competition and funding from the AOC's medal incentive scheme was backdated until February 17, the day he returned a positive test, and does not cover any Olympic period.

### Indonesia Grand Prix called off

JAKARTA (AFP) — The Bob Hasan IAAF Grand Prix athletics meeting in Jakarta on May 16 has been called off because of Indonesia's economic crisis, officials said Wednesday. "It seems that this is not the right time to hold such a costly event," said M.B. Chadir, secretary general of the Indonesian Athletics Federation told the official Antara news agency. The annual meeting has been sponsored by Mohammed "Bob" Hasan, a timber tycoon and current trade and industry minister who is also a member of the Olympic Council of Asia.

### McRae increases lead

AJACCIO (AFP) — Colin McRae's was poised to win back to back editions of the Tour of Corsica here on Wednesday as he increased his lead to 54 seconds. Arch-rival and current championship leader Carlos Saliz of Spain, who had started the day in second, found himself in seventh after suffering brake problems and a puncture. The Spaniard's teammate Didier Auriol also had mechanical problems with his Toyota Corolla and slipped to sixth. Italy's Piero Liati moved into second but is being hard pressed by France's Francois Delecour in a Peugeot, who is only 11 seconds behind.

## South Korea to build new 2002 World Cup stadium

SEOUL (AFP) — The South Korean government, bowing to pressure from soccer fans, decided Wednesday to build a new soccer stadium in Seoul for the 2002 World Cup finals.

Government departments involved in preparations have decided to build the new stadium and keep Seoul as the site of the opening ceremony and semi-finals of the Cup. Culture and Tourism Minister Shin Nak-Kyun said.

"A final decision was made to build the stadium in Seoul... after a full assessment of cost, safety and economy," Shin said.

She apologized for the controversy prompted by a government proposal in early April to build a new stadium in the western city of Incheon. The earlier proposal triggered a storm of protests by soccer fans and Seoul citizens, who charged that South Korea would be the object of international ridicule.

As an alternative, soccer officials had suggested that the Chamsil Olympic stadium in Seoul should be renovated to save money.

But the fans argued that South Korea would lose face to former colonial master Japan, citing polls which showed overwhelming support for the Seoul stadium.

Tokyo swallowed humiliation to give up years of independent preparations and co-host the prestigious 2002 event.

"We dropped the Chamsil stadium because of safety and other problems stemming from its renovation," Shin said.

She denied any political consideration in reversing the government's decision. But newspapers said the government of President Kim Dae-Jung bowed to public pressure ahead of local elections in June.

The June elections for mayors, provincial governors and local assemblymen have been seen as the first test of Kim's leadership amid the country's lingering economic crisis.

Soccer officials and fans, who regard the World Cup as far more significant than the Olympics hosted by Seoul in 1988, claimed victory, saying South Korea's national pres-

tige was saved.

Shin admitted that the cost of building the new stadium should be considered an investment as it had the potential to earn higher revenue.

The minister, however, called for a cost reduction in building the new stadium in Seoul to help South Korea overcome economic woes.

She gave no figures, but ministry officials suggested the cost, originally set at 200 billion won (\$148 million), should be cut to some 150 billion won.

"The World Cup will ensure profits," Korean Football Association head Chung Mong-Jun said, vowing to make the 2002 event successful and profitable.

The economic debacle has cooled a World Cup sales boom, forcing many sports-related firms to go belly-up and also delaying Cup-related projects including new airports, hotels, and communications facilities.

## Muster be says retire

ST. LOUIS (AP) — St. Louis Cardinals manager Tony La Russa said Wednesday he would retire after the season, but he would not say when he would leave the team.

La Russa, 57, has managed the Cardinals since 1982, leading them to two World Series titles in 1982 and 1985.

"I'm not sure I want to be a manager anymore," La Russa said. "I want to be a coach."

La Russa's decision comes as the Cardinals are looking for a new manager to replace him.

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	Bruce Willis & Gary Oldman ... in <b>THE FIFTH ELEMENT</b> Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Robert De Niro & Sharon Stone ... in <b>CASINO</b> Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 9:00	The biggest cinema production <b>TITANIC</b> Shows: 12:00, 3:00, 7:00, 10:30 p.m.	CONCORD '1' Steven Segall's latest movie <b>FIRE DOWN BELOW</b> Shows: 12:30, 3:00, 6:30, 8:15, 10:45 CONCORD '2' <b>ISMAILIA RAYEH GAI - KAMANANA</b> Shows: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	ABDOUN John Travolta ... in <b>SHE IS SO LOVELY</b> & still showing evenings <b>TITANIC</b>	ABDOUN Al Pacino ... in <b>DONIE BRASCO</b> & still showing evenings <b>TITANIC</b>	STARTING APRIL 6TH <b>Don't Laugh Please We're Jordanian</b> Starring Hisham Yousif, Amal Dabbas, Rania Kundi and the group at 8:30 p.m. For reservations call: 4640155, 4625155

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## Muster beats Kafelnikov, says retirement far away

HAMBURG (AP) — Thomas Muster ousted third-seeded Yevgeny Kafelnikov in the second round of the German Open on Wednesday and then dismissed reports of his impending retirement.

In a battle of two former French Open champions, Muster beat an error-prone Kafelnikov 6-4, 6-2 on a cool and rainy day in Hamburg.

Muster then angrily denied that he was preparing for retirement, as suggested on the ATP's Internet site.

"I have a feeling they are trying to bury me alive," the 30-year-old Austrian said.

"I see no reason to stop. I am still far away from that. If my body allows me, I will continue playing for another three or four years," Muster said.

Muster certainly did not look ready for retirement against Kafelnikov.

He looked fit and sharp and he pounced on every opportunity Kafelnikov gave him, which was frequent.

After breaking back for 4-4, Muster won the next two games as well to win the first set. He then broke Kafelnikov's serve for a 4-2 lead and cruised home, winning the last four games of the match.



Thomas Muster

match. Kafelnikov served a double fault on match point.

"He missed a lot of shots, he was playing flat. You had to be patient and that was the key perhaps," Muster said.

The \$2.45 million tournament is one of the Super 9 events and is a major tuneup for the French Open, the only Grand Slam played on clay that starts May 24 in Paris.

Muster said he was looking forward to the "center court where I had the great-

est moment of my life" — his victory there in 1995. Kafelnikov won the French Open a year later.

Once known as King of Clay, Muster has not won on his best surface since the Bogota tournament in November 1996. Of his 44 career titles, 40 have come on clay.

Muster has had a spotty season so far, including the first-round ouster at the Australian Open. He reached the semifinals on the hard courts of Indian Wells, where his victims included then top-ranked Pete Sampras, and the final of the clay-court tournament in Estoril.

He was ousted in the second round of Barcelona and the first round of Monte Carlo, by eventual champion Carlos Moya. He was bothered by a hip problem in Barcelona.

With the French Open approaching, Muster says his game is picking up.

"I'm playing more aggressively, I have no injuries, I am fit and I am feeling very comfortable," Muster said.

The rain stopped play on all courts except the center court, which has a retractable roof. With more rain forecast for the day, it was uncertain how many matches would be held.

## Football association official hopes to resolve soccer dispute 'in coming 48 hours'

By Tareq Ayyub  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Jordan Football Association (JFA) is expected to hold a meeting within the coming two days to discuss the recommendations made by a sub-committee and resolve the dispute which led to the suspension of the Premier League (PL) Championship. A JFA official said Wednesday.

The official, who preferred not to be named, said that a committee formed by the JFA met with representatives of the seven soccer clubs who decided last week to suspend their participation in the PL.

The seven clubs are demanding an equal distribution of ticket sales revenue among the ten PL clubs, irrespective of the number of fans attending each club's matches.

The dispute erupted following a demand by Al Faisali, Al Ramtha, Al Ahli, Kufroum, Al Arabi, Al Hussein and Al Qadisiyyah clubs in which they requested an amendment of the 1997 formula that governs the allocation of the JFA's competition revenue.

Two clubs, Al Wihdat and Shabbab Al Hussein, declined to support this demand and hinted that any change of the present formula would prompt a "reconsideration" of their stand of competing in the PL Championship.

Al Jazireh Club was the only party that refrained from supporting any of the two sides.

The JFA official stressed that a set of recommendations were put forth by the committee to resolve the logjam which has halted the Kingdom's most popular sports event.

Among the recommendation made was to distribute 80 per cent of the revenues among the 10 PL clubs according to regulations in Jordan Cup, PL and indoor contests, where soccer clubs from the first and second divisions take part.

But the committee stressed that the distribution of the revenues should be according to the 1997 agreement between the ten PL clubs.

The formula stipulates that 35 per cent of the revenues be allocated to the two competing clubs, 35 per cent to the remaining clubs, 9 per cent for marketing purposes, 2 per cent to maintain football grounds in the Kingdom and the rest for the JFA.

Last month the JFA signed an agreement with four businessmen to market and sell PL matches in return for a JD500,000.

The committee also added that the agreement should have been signed after a "thorough" consultation with the concerned parties. It also calls for allocating 50 per cent of the TV coverage to the 10 clubs.

The recommendations stressed that the revenues levied from the Golden Quartet (top four team contests) to be distributed "only" among those who are participating in these matches.

The JFA official said that if no agreement was reached to resolve the deadlock, "all options would be open," including the cancellation of the PL contests to devote the JFA's time to the preparation of the Kingdom's national team.

The official said that a JFA meeting was expected in the coming 48 hours to discuss these recommendations. JFA President His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah and Vice-President Saleh Irshaidat were not expected to attend due to they travel abroad.

"The 1997 revenues distribution agreement was reached following a consensus between the 10 clubs and any change should receive the blessing of the 10 clubs and not seven or three," the official said.

The official confirmed recent news reports that the revenues problem was incited by a "journalist" working in a local newspaper "who was behind the whole mess," adding that the JFA would take the necessary measures against him. He did not elaborate.

Al Ahli club president, Sa'eed Shuqom, said that the seven clubs were adamant on their demands during the meeting with the JFA's committee.

Mr. Shuqom told the Jordan Times that the coalition of the seven clubs also demanded the cancellation of the dual punishment by the JFA for each player who receives a red card booking during the soccer contests.

He emphasized that the JFA's rules that each player suspended by a red card booking pay JD50 to JD100, which would be automatically paid by his club.

"We believe that 80 per cent of the PL ticket sales should be allocated among the 10 clubs irrespective of the number of fans of each club," Mr. Shuqom said.

He admitted that their demand to reallocate the sales tickets would most likely hurt the Al Wihdat club, which has a vast popularity among soccer fans in the country.

"We know it is unfair towards Al Wihdat but it is also unfair to keep smaller clubs without enough funding," he added.

Meanwhile, the Al Jazireh club president Abdullah Kiswani said that his club would mediate between the nine clubs to resolve the logjam over the distribution of the ticket sales problem.

Mr. Kiswani stressed that his club was planning to call concerned parties to a meeting to resolve their "internal" differences and to bring the PL back to action.

## Jazz, Pacers win series openers

SALT LAKE CITY (APF) — Karl Malone scored 25 points, including the last two jazz baskets in the final seconds, to give Utah an 83-82 National Basketball Association playoff victory over San Antonio.

The Spurs rallied to lead twice in the final two minutes before Malone answered and the Jazz defense stopped the Spurs, giving Utah a triumph in the opener of their best-of-seven quarter-final series here Tuesday.

"I knew I had to force the issue," Malone said. "Down the stretch I was determined. I was going to make something happen. I wanted to get something going."

Avery Johnson's free throw concluded an 11-1 San Antonio run and gave San Antonio an 80-79 edge with 2:50 remaining. The Spurs had not led the NBA regular season champions since 4-2.

Malone, last season's Most Valuable NBA Player answered with a drive and banked in a shot while being fouled by Spurs center David Robinson.

Malone, who also pulled down eight rebounds, had knocked Robinson unconscious with an elbow to the head last month.

When Malone missed a free throw, Tim Duncan took advantage, scoring the last of his 33 points to put the Spurs ahead 82-81 with 83 seconds to play. Malone answered with the winning

basket on Utah's next possession.

San Antonio failed on three... chances. Robinson was called for an offensive foul to negate a Johnson basket. Chuck Person missed a basty three-point shot and Duncan missed a 15-foot attempt over Greg Foster just before the final buzzer.

"Tim was on such a roll that we thought he would get it," Malone said. "Greg Foster made a huge play on defense."

In Tuesday's other game, host Indiana overcame a 19-point deficit to beat New York 93-83 in the first game of their quarter-final series.

The Pacers' bench started while the Knicks were hurt by a stunt from one of their most famous fans.

Movie director Spike Lee, a front row spectator in New York and noted Knicks fan, has taunted Indiana guard Reggie Miller for years. This year he sent Miller 12 dead roses and said his team would sweep the Pacers.

That swipe was simply fuel to the fire that has burned since the two rivals met in the 1994 and 1995 playoffs.

"There's already history

between the two teams and a lot of bad blood. You don't need anything else to rile you up," Miller said.

"It's always nice to get flowers. He had one for every game of the sweep. We took one out. I'll send it to him. That's one down."

The sweetest rose of all was Indiana reserve Jalen Rose, who matched Travis Best with 18 points off the bench. Antonio Davis added 14 points and the Pacers' bench outscored New York's reserves 56-20.

Their second unit crushed our second unit. It's that simple," New York coach Jeff Van Gundy said.

Indiana trailed 30-11 late in the first quarter but rallied for a 47-45 half-time edge. Rose and Best combined for 21 points in the second quarter without missing a shot. The Knicks had only 14 in the period.

John Starks scored 17 points and Allan Houston added 16 to lead New York. Despite the absence of Patrick Ewing with a wrist injury and Larry Johnson due to suspension, Indiana's Dutch center Rik Smits was awful, missing 16 of 19 shots and scoring only eight points.

The Pacers try to build a

2-0 series lead at home Thursday. The Pacers-Knicks winner faces either Charlotte or reigning champion for a berth in the NBA Finals. The Bulls carry a 1-0 lead into game two of their series on Wednesday at Chicago.

The Seattle SuperSonics try to build a 2-0 bulge in their series with another home victory over the Los Angeles Lakers on Wednesday.

Laker center Shaquille O'Neal insulted emotional Sonics coach George Karl, who is in the final year of his contract and said O'Neal gets away with fouls.

"He cries like a woman and woman wasn't the word I was really looking for. The word I'm looking for is 'can't say on film,'" said O'Neal, who apologized to women for comparing Karl to them.

Karl, who joked he might wear an apron for game two, replied by saying, "There are some great women coaches in this game."

## Mutombo wins NBA defensive honour for 3rd time

ATLANTA (APF) — Atlanta center Dikembe Mutombo became the first three-time winner of National Basketball Association Defensive Player of the Year honours, edging Seattle's Gary Payton by two votes.

Mutombo won for the second season in a row and third time in four years here on Tuesday. He won the honour with Denver in 1995, lost it to Payton in 1996, reclaimed it last year and kept it narrowly this year. Mutombo received 39 of a possible 116 votes from a journalist panel of North American NBA writers.

Payton had 37 votes. San Antonio centre David Robinson was third with 10 votes. Chicago's Michael

Jordan was fourth with six. Both are former winners of the award. Mutombo, from the Democratic Republic of Congo, joins Nigeria's Hakeem Olajuwon of Houston, Milwaukee's Sidney Moncrief and Dennis Rodman, now with reigning champion Chicago, as back-to-back winners of the award. The Hawks were ousted by Charlotte last week in the opening round of the NBA playoffs.

The seven-year NBA veteran was second in the NBA in blocked shots with 3.4 a

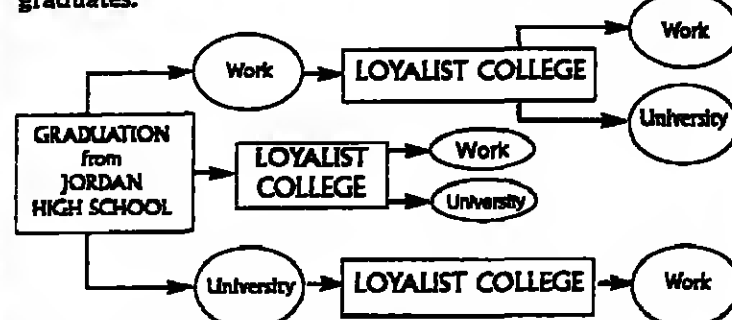
game. He also averaged 13.4 points and 11.4 rebounds, 70 per cent of which were defensive rebounds. On the final day of the regular season, Mutombo recorded his 2,027th career block, matching Larry Nance for the 10th-best total in NBA history. Mutombo becomes the third Atlanta player honoured in NBA post-season awards.

Forward Alan Henderson was named the NBA's Most Improved Player and guard Steve Smith won the NBA's citizenship award.

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# Iraq raises its next food plan target to \$4 billion

BAGHDAD (AP) — Iraq has raised its target for oil sales under the next oil-for-food plan from \$3 billion to \$4 billion, U.N. and Iraqi officials said Wednesday.

But the realisation of the higher target depends on Iraq quickly receiving the go-ahead from the United Nations to buy the parts required to repair its oil wells and pipelines, an Iraqi oil ministry official said.

U.N. oil experts who visited Iraq in March reported that the country needs at least \$300 million to repair its production and export facilities.

The U.N. Security Council has not yet sanctioned such a disbursement from the revenues Iraq earns from the oil-for-food programme. But Iraqi officials expect it to do so in the near future.

Under the programme, Iraq is allowed to bypass the sweeping sanctions imposed after its 1990 invasion of Kuwait and sell up to \$2 billion worth of oil every six months. The revenues, which are controlled by the United Nations, have to be spent on buying food and humanitarian goods for Iraq's 22 million people.

Early this year, the Security Council allowed Iraq to boost the value of its oil exports to \$5.2 billion for six months.

The present phase expires on June 3.

The top U.N. envoy in Iraq, Prakash Shah, said Wednesday he had discussed the revised plan for the next phase with Iraqi Vice-President Taha Yassin Ramadan and Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz.

The plan, which spells out the distribution of the food and goods, will be ready "very soon," Mr. Shah told the Associated Press.

Iraqi trade ministry officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said they intended to submit the \$4 billion plan to the United Nations by the end of the week.

U.N. sources, also asking not to be identified, said they expect the Security Council to approve the plan before June 3.

Iraqi oil ministry officials say that at current prices, Iraq will need to export two million barrels of oil a day to earn \$4 billion in six months.

The ministry's director-general of planning and studies, Faleh Al Khayat, said that Iraq currently has the capacity to export about 1.6 million barrels a day.

Mr. Al Khayat said Iraq will raise this to two million barrels, "if the United Nations permits the purchase of the necessary materials and equipment." Once the parts arrive, it will take at least two months to install them, he said.

## Israeli hardliners mobilise against U.S. peace deal

BEIT AL (AFP) — Israeli settlers and their political backers vowed Wednesday to oust Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu if he signs a peace agreement with Palestinians based on U.S. proposals for troop withdrawals in the West Bank.

"We will topple Netanyahu's government if he does not reject the U.S. pressure and puts our existence in danger," said Hanan Porat, deputy leader of the pro-settlement National Religious Party, which is a major partner in the ruling coalition.

Porat and other members of parliament opposed to further troop withdrawals in the occupied territories held an emergency meeting in this settlement north of Jerusalem ahead of a planned Israel-Palestinian-U.S. summit meeting Monday in Washington.

Mr. Netanyahu's cabinet has refused so far to authorise more than a nine per cent pullback.

Porat and other members of the so-called Land of Israel front in parliament, travelled by helicopter to Beit Al to signal their support for the settlements.

The group claims to have the support of more than a dozen members of parliament from Mr. Netanyahu's coalition — more than enough to wipe out his 61-seat majority in the 120-member chamber.

The settlers say that a 13 per cent withdrawal from the West Bank would leave a "number of settlements, including Beit El, a community of 4,000, surrounded by land under Palestinian control."

Pointing to a map delineating Israeli and Palestinian zones surrounding Beit Al, Porat said, "If Netanyahu accepts a 13 per cent redeployment these areas shown in yellow [where Israel has security control] would become a single sector where Yasser Arafat would have full powers."

David Shabat, Beit Al's mayor, said a 13 per cent withdrawal would put the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) in full or partial control of some 40 per cent of the West Bank "including a continuous stretch of territory running from Ramallah to Nablus."

"This will compromise the future of the 144 Jewish settlements in the region," he said, noting that four Beit El residents, including a mother and her young son, had been shot and killed by Palestinians over the past three years.

## Swiss to give PNA \$5m for prisoners

RAMALLAH (AFP) — Switzerland signed a deal Wednesday to give the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) \$5 million to help rehabilitate former prisoners held by Israel, the Palestinian social affairs minister said.

"We welcome this support from the Swiss government, which will provide us \$5 million over the next two years for the second phase of our rehabilitation program," the minister, Intisar Al Wazir, told journalists.

Mr. Wazir signed the deal in the West Bank town of Ramallah with Switzerland's representative to the PNA, Annick Tord.

Radi Al Jerai, the head of the prisoner rehabilitation program, said the European Union had promised to provide another \$6 million for the programme.

The programme's second phase will provide services for 6,000 Palestinians who were imprisoned for at least a year by Israel, most of them for involvement in the 1987-1994 intifada uprising against the occupation, Mr. Jerai said.

The programme, which in its first phase helped some 9,500 former prisoners, provides university courses, technical training, loans and free health care for a year for the prisoners, he said.

Israel currently holds around 3,000 Palestinians in its prisons, most for political activities or violence, and promised to release many of them under 1994 self-rule accords.

But their release has been held up in deadlocked negotiations with the PNA.

## Israel drops case against extremist who attacked Palestinian man

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli Attorney General Eliakim Rubinstein has decided to drop criminal charges against the juvenile son of a leading settler who attacked a Palestinian, a spokeswoman said Wednesday.

The unidentified minor allegedly attacked a Palestinian man and a baby he was carrying in the West Bank city of Hebron in 1995, the Yediot Ahronot newspaper reported.

Mr. Rubinstein agreed to a police request that the charges be dropped for lack of evidence after the police were unable to obtain the testimony of a key Palestinian witness in the case, said justice ministry spokeswoman Ety Eshed.

"Upon checking the case, the attorney general agreed there were problems in the testimony and there were not sufficient and just grounds to continue the case," Ms. Eshed told AFP.

Mr. Rubinstein had agreed to delay deliberations for several months to allow police to collect further evidence against the minor but none was found, she added.

But Mr. Rubinstein ruled the decision to drop charges did not constitute an acquittal since police can in the future present any additional evidence against the minor and reopen the case.

Israeli troops withdrew from some 80 per cent of Hebron in 1996, remaining behind to guard a Jewish settler enclave in the city centre.

## Resigned PNA attorney general attacks lack of due process

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — The first thing Faysal Abu Rahme did upon becoming Palestinian attorney general was to order the release of 11 political dissidents who had been held for months without charge.

The dissidents, all Islamists, were promptly arrested a few hours later by the Palestinian National Authority's (PNA) ever-present security forces, Mr. Abu Rahme recalled.

It was a hint of things to come.

In late April, Mr. Abu Rahme said he authorised two Palestinian human rights groups to visit jailed leaders of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas. But security forces tore up his orders.

That was the last straw for the 69-year-old lawyer, who announced his resignation late last week after only 10 months in office. He explained his decision in an interview published Wednesday.

"If the law was implemented correctly, there would not be one prisoner in any Palestinian jail," Mr. Abu Rahme was quoted as saying by the Arabic daily Al Quds.

He said security forces should not be allowed to arrest civilians "without warrants from the attorney general."

Mr. Abu Rahme told the Associated Press that "without law there is chaos, and the state becomes a jungle."

Palestinian Justice Minister Freih Abu Medeen said Mr. Abu Rahme's appointment was a "mistake" and contended that he left office for reasons of health. Mr. Abu Rahme responded by saying he never missed a day of work.

Rights activists and legislators rallied to support Mr. Abu Rahme and criticised the low priority given to establishing an effective court system and assuring due process.

"The Palestinian leaders are not interested in establishing an independent judiciary. They do not want any monitoring. They do not want to be held accountable," said Hatem Abdul Qader, a member of the elected Palestinian Legislative Council.

Palestinian leaders have justified their actions by saying the PNA is in its infancy and that Israel and the United States are pressuring it to take tough measures against activists.

"We are in the nation-building stage," said Ibrahim Abu Daqqa, human rights adviser to Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and the man deemed most likely to succeed Mr. Abu Rahme as attorney general.

"The Palestinian (National) Authority is keen on respecting human rights and the rule of law. But there are no such activities without blessings," Bassem Eid, a human rights activist who has been arrested for his outspoken criticism, said the PNA had become particularly defensive since the killing of Hamas bombmaker Mohmedine Sharif on March 29.

Mr. Arafat's government blames Hamas' military wing for Sharif's death while Hamas says the PNA is covering up Israeli involvement.

Mr. Eid's group reported Wednesday that more than 150 people — most of them Hamas supporters — were detained in the wake of Sharif's death on vague charges such as affiliating with opposition groups, "raising doubts about the official version of events" and "incitement of internal strife." None of the prisoners have been allowed visits by lawyers or human rights monitors.

ANKARA (AFP) — Turkish President Suleyman Demirel accused Syria of stirring anti-Turkish feeling among Arab nations because of Turkey's relations with Israel, the Anatolia news agency reported Wednesday.

"Turkish-Israeli cooperation is not targeted at any country," said Mr. Demirel after returning from a visit to Tunisia.

"The propaganda peddled by countries such as Syria is wrong. It is true that Syria is provoking the Arab World," he said, adding: "On the contrary, the development of Turkish-Israeli relations will contribute to regional peace."

Israel and Turkey have since 1996 signed several military cooperation accords, their bilateral relations having improved considerably since 1994.

Several Arab countries such as Egypt, Syria and Iran were angered by the cooperation, Tehran interprets the military accords as a direct threat to its security.

"If Syria wants to be Turkey's enemy, it will have to bear the consequences," warned Mr. Demirel without saying what these would be.

"Turkey has signed similar accords with 28 countries, eight of which are members of the Islamic Development Bank," he noted.

Relations between Syria and Turkey are already strained because Ankara believes the separatist Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) receives backing from Damascus, a charge the Syrian government denies.

The PKK has been engaged in a fight for an independent Kurdish state, on Turkey's borders with Syria, Iraq and Iran, since 1984.



MARKING KARBALA: An Iranian woman, clad in black chador, touches a traditional ornament in one of Tehran mosques Wednesday during ceremonies to mark the death anniversary of the seventh-century Muslim Imam Hussein, Imam Hussein died along with 71 of his followers in a battle against an army of Calif Yazid of the Omayyad Dynasty in Karbala south of Iraq (Reuters photo)

## Syria stirs anti-Turkish stands in the Arab World — president

*'If Syria wants to be Turkey's enemy, it will have to bear consequences'*

ANKARA (AFP) — Turkish President Suleyman Demirel accused Syria of stirring anti-Turkish feeling among Arab nations because of Turkey's relations with Israel, the Anatolia news agency reported Wednesday.

"Turkish-Israeli cooperation is not targeted at any country," said Mr. Demirel after returning from a visit to Tunisia.

"The propaganda peddled by countries such as Syria is wrong. It is true that Syria is provoking the Arab World," he said, adding: "On the contrary, the development of Turkish-Israeli relations will contribute to regional peace."

Israel and Turkey have since 1996 signed several military cooperation accords, their bilateral relations having improved considerably since 1994.

Several Arab countries such as Egypt, Syria and Iran were angered by the cooperation, Tehran interprets the military accords as a direct threat to its security.

"If Syria wants to be Turkey's enemy, it will have to bear the consequences," warned Mr. Demirel without saying what these would be.

"Turkey has signed similar accords with 28 countries, eight of which are members of the Islamic Development Bank," he noted.

Relations between Syria and Turkey are already strained because Ankara believes the separatist Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) receives backing from Damascus, a charge the Syrian government denies.

The PKK has been engaged in a fight for an independent Kurdish state, on Turkey's borders with Syria, Iraq and Iran, since 1984.

## Turkey ready to improve ties with Germany

ANKARA (AFP) — Turkey said Wednesday it was willing to improve its battered ties with Germany after months of trading accusations over Ankara's bid to join the European Union (EU).

"We, too, want an improvement in Turkish-German relations," a spokesman for the Turkish foreign ministry, Sermet Atacanli, told reporters in Ankara in a response to questions about remarks by Germany's Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel.

"Turkey and Germany have deep relations," Mr. Atacanli said.

Mr. Kinkel was quoted by Turkish newspapers on Wednesday as telling a press conference in Strasbourg on Tuesday he was "willing to do everything" to get relations back to normal with Ankara.

"Let's put the past behind us," Mr. Kinkel reportedly said.

Mr. Atacanli noted that Turkey's Foreign Minister Ismail Cem in April invited Mr. Kinkel to Ankara to overcome the crisis in the relations between the two countries.

Ankara accuses Bonn of being behind the EU's decision at a summit in Luxembourg in December to exclude Turkey from a list of potential new EU member states, but both the German government and the EU have denied this.

In March, Turkey's Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz likened Germany's European policy to the aggressive "Lebensraum" theory of Hitler's Third Reich, a statement Mr. Kinkel has qualified as a "fit of madness."

But in recent weeks, both sides have said they are willing to stop the harsh rhetoric and restore a working relationship.

## Ukraine, U.S. sign nuclear accord

KIEV (AP) — Ukraine and the United States on Wednesday signed an agreement on peaceful nuclear cooperation, which envisages \$30 million in U.S. aid to Kiev to modernise its nuclear power industry.

The accord was signed in Kiev by Ukrainian Foreign Minister Boris Tarasyuk and U.S. Ambassador Steven Karl Pifer.

It followed Ukraine's cancellation in March of a planned \$45 million nuclear deal with Iran.

Washington promised Ukraine enhanced economic ties and cooperation in the nuclear power industry if it refrained from selling atomic technology to Tehran — which the United States accuses of developing nuclear weapons.

Mr. Tarasyuk hailed the deal as a milestone for further strategic cooperation between the two countries and said it would help Kiev obtain sophisticated technologies for its nuclear power industry.

He also said the agreement would provide for the start of scientific work on the production of Ukraine's own nuclear fuel, the Interfax news agency reported.

At present, Ukraine purchases fuel rods for its five nuclear power plants in neighbouring Russia.

The Ukrainian foreign ministry said the accord envisages scientific development of fuel rods for the VVER-1000 reactors and the production of pilot samples.

## Kohl's height brought him closer to Chirac

AVIGNON (AFP) — The towering height of Chancellor Helmut Kohl has brought him closer to President Jacques Chirac than expected at their meeting in southern France Wednesday. Kohl aides who inspected rooms at the deluxe Mirande Hotel in Avignon found the shower stall to be too low for the chancellor who is 1.93 m tall. To avoid unnecessary bumps to his head Kohl checked in at the 16th-century Hotel de l'Europe where Chirac had registered to spend the summit day, said Mirande manager Aron Stein. The leaders generally do not stay at the same hotel when meeting at regular summits which are held twice a year.

## Botha's engagement is off

CAPE TOWN (AFP) — The engagement between former South African president P.W. Botha and the much younger Reinette Naude is reported to be off because she is still seeing her former boyfriend. Botha, 82, broke off the engagement after confronting 48-year-old Naude over rumours that she was seen hand-in-hand with tall, blond police detective Captain Erik Schoeman, according to the Cape Times.

Naude and Schoeman had a long-running relationship before she became engaged to Botha last October, and she was cited in Schoeman's divorce last year.

## Michael's court hearing adjourned

BEVERLY HILLS (AFP) — A court hearing at which pop singer George Michael was to have entered a plea to charges of lewd conduct has been adjourned to May 15. The singer, who could face up to six months in jail and a \$1,000 fine, was not present during a brief hearing in Beverly Hills municipal court, where he was represented by lawyer Ira Reiner. Michael, whose real name is Georgios Kyriacos Panayiotou, was arrested April 7 after a police officer saw him commit the lewd act. Police Lieutenant Edward Kreins said, the singer revealed that he was gay in a CNN interview shortly after the incident.

## Hanks 'puts little hats and clothes on his naked Oscar'

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — Actress Rita Wilson, who starred in "Sleepless in Seattle" and "Mixed Nuts," is also wife to Tom Hanks, and she loves talking about her husband, who acts more like the kid-in-a-man's body from "Big" than his Oscar-winning role in "Forrest Gump." She admitted Hanks puts little hats and clothes on his naked Oscar statuette that he won for "Philadelphia." And, Hanks confirms, "My friends have been sending me tiny clothes and other things to put in the case with 'my little man,' which is what I call this most prominent statue. They look so cold because Oscars don't have any clothes."

## Ross not giving up on Baker story

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — Singer Diana Ross is still not giving up doing her own story about diva singer Josephine Baker, the woman who she feels most connected to in history. She says none of the past television or film projects have done justice to the singer of the 1930s. "I'm bitter about it, yes," says Ross. "I got scooped and it was a personal tragedy because I really wanted to do that movie. I don't think that dream is over... I've talked to many producers and directors in Europe who are still very interested in that project."

## Iraq accuses U.S. of hijacking

NICOSIA (AFP) — Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz accused the United States of hijacking the oil-for-food programme, saying it was free of sanctions and insisted his country was free of sanctions. "The United States, with its destruction, is stubbornly standing against the oil-for-food programme," said Mr. Aziz. "This policy is a deliberate attempt to block the way towards the reconstruction of Iraq." He said the programme was "strongly resisted by the Security Council" and "illegally imposed by the United States." Mr. Aziz told a conference of world at large, it is illegal, unfair and against the principles of international law. "The programme was taken collectively by the Security Council," he said, "and the United States is hijacking it, now the United States is hijacking the oil-for-food programme."

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## Algerian 'terrorists' murder eight people

ALGERIA (AFP) — A terrorist group murdered eight people and wounded others overnight in the Kabylie region, south of Algiers, security officials said Friday. The "terrorist" killings took place in the town of Bouachra, some 80 km from Algiers, a source said. A new wave of attacks in the bitter Algerian conflict, which is seen as a struggle between Islamists and humanitarian forces, has been reported in the past weeks after a period of relative calm. Islamists seized an insurgency in the January 1992 campaign of general elections, the now outlawed Front Islamique pour le Salut (FIS) pushed to win.

## Booth's engagement is off

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## Ros with U.S. Co

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